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### The Preaching of Clovis G Chappell- A Study of the Published Sermons in Light of the Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel as Articulated by C. F. W. Walther

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THE PREACHING OF CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL: A STUDY OF  
THE PUBLISHED SERMONS IN LIGHT OF THE PROPER  
DISTINCTION BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL AS  
ARTICULATED BY C. F. W. WALTHER

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Theology

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by

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May 1983

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## PREFACE

The title of this dissertation is *The Preaching of Clovis G. Chappell: A study of the published sermons in the light of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel as articulated by C. F. W. Walther.*

C. F. W. Walther holds that two basic assumptions are at the heart of all true preaching of the pure Word of God:

1. All articles of faith are presented in accordance with the Scriptures and,
2. The proclaimer of the Word of God understands that the doctrinal content of the entire Holy Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, is made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other: The doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel are the inspired Word of God, but they are two distinct and fundamentally different doctrines. C. F. W. Walther states in Thesis II of The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, "Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all the articles of faith in

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 6.

accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

Beyond correct preaching, or, presenting the sermon in such a way that every statement in it is derived from the Word of God, thus being in agreement with it, there is but one equally significant measurement of the orthodox preacher. The final test of an orthodox preacher rests on this: that he rightly divides the Law and Gospel in his sermons.

Walther asserts persistently throughout his volume of lectures that the understanding and proper distinction between Law and Gospel is so vital to correct preaching that it is essential that every conscientious preacher or serious practitioner of the Word aspire to achieve this skill. "Only he is an orthodox teacher who, in addition to other requirements, rightly distinguishes Law and Gospel from each other."<sup>3</sup> And again:

A preacher must not throw all doctrines in a jumble before his hearers, just as they come into his mind, but cut for each of his hearers a portion such as he needs . . . he must see to it that secure, care-free, and wilful sinners hear the thunderings of the Law, contrite sinners, however, the sweet voice of the Savior's grace. That is what it means to give to each hearer his due.<sup>4</sup>

It is the intention of this study to facilitate this understanding.

To realize the objectives of this study a body of readily available sermons is desirable about which certain evaluative judgments can be made. It is for this purpose that we introduce the work of Clovis G. Chappell. Dr. Chappell was widely known as a pastor of the Southern Methodist Church for over fifty years. His writings of more than thirty volumes have been a source for student preachers and

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

veteran pastors alike. Chappell was a preacher and writer who has influenced preachers and their preaching, in and out of his denomination, for more than half a century.<sup>5</sup> For many beginning preachers Clovis Chappell was a model for preaching. Was he, however, a correct preacher of the Word? Did people who were to learn from Chappell receive their education from one who properly distinguished between Law and Gospel? This researcher has read over five hundred of Chappell's published sermons. These offerings of Clovis Chappell were evaluated and the writer extracted from them discourses that were cited as representative of Chappell's work and thought.<sup>6</sup> This part of the study was drawn from Chappell's published books of sermons over the fifty-one year span from his ordination in 1908 until his post-retirement Sermons on Peter in 1959. The aforementioned set of criteria for the evaluation of the sermons of Clovis Chappell are drawn from the English edition of C. F. W. Walther's classic The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel as reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau.

According to Clovis Chappell's nephew Wallace Chappell, pastor of Old McKendree Church in downtown Nashville, who was described by Bishop Ray Short as "close"<sup>7</sup> to his uncle, our subject took pains

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<sup>5</sup>John Robert Parks, "Reflections on the Preaching of Clovis G. Chappell in the Mid-South," a Doctor of Ministry project submitted to the faculty of Vanderbilt Divinity School in 1979 located in Joint University Libraries in Nashville, Tennessee, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Wallace Chappell, Clovis Chappell: Preacher of the Word (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

developing and writing his sermons, often after carefully writing them out, revising them as many as six times.<sup>8</sup>

This commitment to thoroughness in daily preparations allows us to feel confident that since Chappell edited and presented these sermons for public consumption personally, he felt they were, in his opinion, representative of his work.

### The Value of This Study

Walther persistently asserted that the understanding and proper distinction between Law and Gospel is vital to correct or orthodox preaching even to the point of holding this understanding up as the "supreme art among Christians."<sup>9</sup> If a person is to be a serious practitioner of the Word of God, he must aspire to this skill or ability.

The value of this study then is twofold: our hypothesis was that C. F. W. Walther's classic work could be distilled into a pithy corpus and from this digest a set of criteria could be drawn from which objective judgments could be made regarding the work of Clovis G. Chappell.<sup>10</sup> We, then, have arrived at a useful tool valuable in its own right. At the completion of this research we will have in hand a tool that will facilitate, for serious students of the Word, the making of judgments on their work or the works of others in light of Walther's test for correct or orthodox preaching. Does this

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Walther, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup>A helpful instrument here was found in E. Eckhardt's apparatus drawn from the appendix of Walther's work. Walther, pp. 415-19.

sermon properly distinguish between Law and Gospel? This is the first of the two values of our study.

The second value of this study is that the work of Clovis Chappell will have been studied and evaluated in the light of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Chappell's skill or ability to properly distinguish between Law and Gospel will have been objectively evaluated against the gist of C. F. W. Walther's classic work. The question as to whether Chappell is, or is not, a correct model for those who would properly distinguish between the Law and the Gospel will have been objectively addressed.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to gain perspective for the distillation of C. F. W. Walther's theology it is to our advantage to know the intellectual academic agenda with which Walther approaches his enterprise. He comes to his task with certain presuppositions and a distinct theological predisposition. Walther, in the fullest sense of the word, was a Lutheran theologian; even to the point of being chided by his detractors as a citationist and a repristinating Lutheran theologian.<sup>1</sup> Within this framework our subject held doggedly to three basic propositions:

1. The chief article and material principle of all Evangelical Lutheran thought is Luther's doctrine of justification by grace through faith.
2. The original manuscripts of the canonical Scriptures are the verbally, plenary inspired, inerrant, Word of God and as such are norm and formal principle of all theological enterprise and life.
3. The Confessions of the Symbolical writings of the Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord are the correct understanding or interpretation of the Word of God and as such must be adhered to by her teachers and pastors by pledge in unconditional subscription.

These are the presuppositions with which C. F. W. Walther approaches his theological endeavor.

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "Walther's Contribution to Lutheranism," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):583.

In the following chapters this writer intends to explore Walther's three basic assumptions in order to gain a clearer perspective from which to view our subject's thetical assertions and their theological implications.

## CHAPTER I

### WALTHER: JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

For C. F. W. Walther there was a chief doctrine of all of Christendom. This "treasure" or "kernel of the whole Christian religion," as he called it, was the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. In Walther's words:

The doctrine of justification, namely, that man becomes righteous and blessed before God by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, and through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness, is the chief doctrine of all Christendom. Yes, it is the real kernel of the whole Christian religion whereby it is differentiated from each and every other religion in the world. This teaching, therefore, is also the greatest treasure. Covered up under the debris of papal, human doctrine, . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Walther saw this article as the cornerstone doctrine on which all others were founded. Here Walther quotes Luther:

In it all other doctrines of our Christian faith are contained; if it is pure and upright, then all the others are in proper shape. . . . For everything depends and is founded on it, and it draws all the others along with itself. . . . If someone errs in another [doctrine], he certainly does not understand this one correctly; and even if he holds all the others but does not have this one correct, then all is still in vain.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly for Walther, as it had been for Luther, the doctrine of justification is that doctrine with which the church stands or falls. For Walther the word "justify" as it is used in the Holy Scriptures, when

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<sup>1</sup>Erwin L. Lueker, "Justification in the Theology of Walther," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October, 1961):598-99.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 600-1.



it is applied to the justification of the sinner before God, signifies the objective, forensic act of God by which the sinner is declared or regarded righteous;<sup>3</sup>

The justification of the sinner is from first to last an activity in the heart of God. Having foreseen the fall of man from eternity, God in mercy covenanted with His Son that if he [Jesus] would redeem the world, "He would impute the atonement to all men and would declare righteous all who would believe in him."<sup>4</sup>

For Walther, "the righteousness which avails before God is foreign righteousness and justification is something which takes place in the heart of God without regard to man's work."<sup>5</sup> Walther's thrust here is to elevate the objectivity of the Word of God against the subjectivity of man's feeling.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, he continually insisted that Christ's righteousness is something that takes place outside of man and that man's justification is something that takes place in the heart of God.<sup>7</sup> In other words, man by his own effort contributes nothing to his own salvation. From beginning to end it is an act of God's grace. Walther asserts the cause which moved God to regard and declare sinners righteous as twofold: (1) His Universal Grace, and (2) the righteousness of Christ which was won for all men by his death on the cross.<sup>8</sup> For Walther, as for Luther before him, the cross of Christ is central. For it is in the cross of Christ that the justice and the grace of God and the sinfulness of man are revealed. This was the continual focus of his writing and his preaching:

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<sup>3</sup>Henry J. Eggold, "Walther as Preacher," Th.D. Thesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1962, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

The focus of all of Walther's preaching is God's justification of the sinner by grace through faith. From the vantage point of this doctrine all other doctrines gain their significance. The cross of Christ reveals the justice and the grace of God, the sinfulness and incapacity of man, and the self-giving, seeking love of Jesus. Only in the cross does the Spirit's work have meaning, only there does the Christian find the motive power for sanctification, and only there, the hope of heaven.<sup>9</sup>

Walther, on page one of Der Lutheraner, said of the article on Justification by grace through faith: "This one article reigns and should only reign in my heart, namely, faith in my dear Lord Jesus Christ, . . ."<sup>10</sup>

In encapsulating Walther's theology of justification, we conclude that Walther saw justification by grace through faith as entirely God's work from the beginning to the end. Man does not contribute to his own salvation. Even faith itself is not an act of man for he is not saved by his own act or acts but that of God in Jesus Christ. Man is redeemed solely by the doing and dying of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the Redeemer of the whole world. Romans 3:24 states Walther's case ". . . we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, . . ." that sinners are justified gratuitously without anything, even the least thing, being required of them. If this were not true, man's salvation could not be considered a gift. Man receives Jesus as his faithful savior by making Christ's Gospel his refuge. Justification is a free gift of God. The command to believe is not a condition of man's justification and salvation but an invitation to accept a free gift from God. The preacher's urgent plea is simply an invitation to poor, terrified, penitent sinners, crushed, and struck down by the Law, to receive the Gospel. At this moment the faith which the Holy Spirit creates justifies because it

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Lueker, p. 598.

clings to the gracious promise of Christ, and because it lays hold on Christ the Lord of Life. For C. F. W. Walther this is justification by grace through faith alone.

## CHAPTER II

### WALTHER AND THE SCRIPTURE

Walther was born and reared in a time of skepticism and unbelief. Robert Preus in his Concordia Theological Monthly article "Walther and the Scriptures" asserts "the Spirit of his day was the spirit of skepticism, a Pilatelike spirit, which asks sneeringly, 'What is truth?'"<sup>1</sup> But, it is Walther's conviction that there is theological truth and that this truth was worth earnestly contending for. Dr. Walther set forth his understanding of the locus of truth in the following words:

We believe that there is such a thing as truth, and this truth is God's Word. That is to say, it is contained in the inspired Scriptures of the apostles and prophets.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. H. H. Walker captured Walther's attitudes toward the Scriptures or the Word of God in these words:

Walther's position was this: Whatever the Bible declares to be the truth, that is the truth, though the whole world may declare it to be false; on the other hand, whatever the Bible declares to be false and erroneous, that is false and erroneous, though the whole world, yea, an angel from heaven, declare it to be correct and true. He did not allow human reason and intellect to sit in judgment upon, or correct, a truth revealed in the Scriptures. He did not follow church traditions nor listen to alleged new revelations. The Bible alone, the whole Bible, and nothing but the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert D. Preus, "Walther and the Scriptures," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (November, 1961):677.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Bible in theology--that was Walther's position in regard to the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

For C. F. W. Walther, there was only one set of criteria for determining Christian truth and theology: the Holy Scripture. To him, giving ear to the Word of God alone was the chief article of believing Christians. He concluded a sermon on the festival of Epiphany emphasizing this conviction:

My Beloved, let us all learn this chief article of believing Christians, to wit, that we give ear only to the Word of God. That is a lamp unto our feet and the right and only light on the way to heaven. 'We have a true prophetic Word,' etc. Learn to know the real trick of the devil, who loves nothing better than to lead us away from the Word; for he knows that, if he can do that, he has won, and we have lost. If we do not put our entire confidence in the Word of God, our faith will avail us nothing; for then it is no true faith, all our praying and sighing and doing will then be useless; yea, we are without Christ, who lets Himself be found only in the Word.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Eggold, in his Walther dissertation, elaborates on the Lutheran leader's understanding of the importance of the Word, adding that for Walther, the Word of God is not only the foundation of faith, but is also the judge and rule, a plumbline in all questions and disputes of faith. God's Word is the certain touchstone of all truth and error. The Holy Scriptures are the weapon with which believers do battle against false teachers. He concludes, therefore, that the Word of God must be supreme in the church and the only guide and rule of our faith and life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>W. G. Polack, The Story of C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 19. Dr. H. H. Walker is quoted here on p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. C. Fritz, "Walther the Preacher," Concordia Theological Monthly 7 (October, 1936):746.

<sup>5</sup>Henry J. Eggold, "Walther, the Preacher," Th.D. Thesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, May, 1962, pp. 77-78.

Dr. Preus confirms Eggold's understanding of Walther's assertion:

Every discipline, Walther points out, has its first principles, whether mathematics, or physics, or ethics. . . . So it is also in theology. Here we follow the old theological axiom: "Whatever is revealed by God in these written words [of Scripture] is incontrovertibly true and worthy of faith." The Scriptures have every characteristic of a proper source or principle of theology. They are the primary witness we have of God, they come directly from Him, they are self-authenticating and unassailable. Moreover, it is the claim of the Scriptures themselves that they are the only source and authority for theology in the church (cf. Deut. 4:2; Jos. 23:6; Is. 8:20; Luke 16:29; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). In all their teaching and preaching Christ and the apostles make Scripture the source of all their doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

William Dallman, W. H. T. Dau and Theodore Engelder in their joint enterprise, Walther and the Church, note Walther's conviction that Holy Scripture given by the inspiration of God, is the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine. They attest that Dr. Walther and his colleagues of like mind were raised up by God to keep the church centered on the sola Scriptura. Walther reaffirmed, and insisted on, the sole authority of Scripture. He ruled out the appeal of any other authority. In 1883 at the dedication of Concordia Seminary, President Walther declared:

In this house the subject of our incessant study shall not be the word and wisdom of man but the Word of God, nothing but the Word of God, and the whole Word of God.<sup>7</sup>

This same group of writers focused on the outstanding theological characteristics of Walther and his brethren and reduced them to two basic postulates. Walther set forth these two postulates at a meeting of the synodical jubilee:

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<sup>6</sup>Preus, p. 678.

<sup>7</sup>Wm. Dallman, W. H. T. Dau and Th. Engelder, Walther and the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 16.

We have adhered, first, to the supreme principle of all Christianity, that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are, from the first to the last letter, the inspired Word of the great God, the only rule and norm of faith and life, of all doctrine and all teachers, and the supreme judge in all religious controversies. Next we have adhered to the second supreme principle of our truly evangelical Church, that the article of the justification of the poor sinner before God by grace alone, for the sake of Christ alone, and therefore through faith alone, is the chief fundamental article of the whole Christian religion, with which the Church stands and falls.<sup>8</sup>

Preus does a similar digest in the area of Walther's "The Scripture Principles" and concludes:

The Scripture principle involves two things, according to Walther. 1. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the one source of religion and all our theological knowledge. In Scripture alone are the passages or truths . . . from which theological conclusions can be made. Our theology is Christian therefore only insofar as it is drawn from Scripture. 2. Scripture is the only rule and norm by which all teachers and teachings are to be judged--not experience, . . . not the assured results of modern scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

Preus suggests that when Walther projects these two conclusions there are necessarily affirmed at least three things about Scripture.

[1.] We are declaring that these writings are God's Word, breathed from His mouth in both content and form. [2.] We are declaring that these Scriptures are perfect, or sufficient, that is to say, they contain everything a poor sinner needs to know for salvation. [3.] We are declaring finally that the Sacred Scriptures are clear, and clarity means that everything necessary to be known for salvation and a godly life is revealed in Scripture in such a manner that an attentive reader of sound mind and some skill in language can understand it.<sup>10</sup>

Preus summarizes this portion of Walther as follows:

Scripture . . . is the only criterion for determining the Christian religion and theology, the only source of Christian truth from which we can actually draw reliable facts, the only rule and norm of all faith and life, and the supreme judge, rendering the final decision in all controversies on any points of faith.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Preus, pp. 677-78.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 679.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 683.

On the Verbal, Plenary Understanding  
of Holy Scripture Inspiration

It can readily be understood from the foregoing why C. F. W. Walther was viewed by his contemporaries as first and foremost a Bible theologian. Walther held to the verbal, plenary understanding of inspiration of Holy Scripture. The trio of writers who authored Walther and the Church state the case for Walther in these words:

Dr. Walther was a Bible theologian. He stood for the Scripture principle, the sola Scriptura--the written Word of the Bible the supreme and sole authority in theology and in the Church,--and for its complementary, the great doctrine of the verbal, plenary, inspiration of Holy Scripture. . . . From first to last he bore faithful witness to this fundamental truth. He was ever alive to the need of warning the Church of the disastrous results of the denial of the verbal, plenary, inspiration of Scripture.<sup>12</sup>

C. F. W. Walther staunchly held to this much maligned position on the nature of the inspiration of God's Word. To him there was no room for doubt as to the nature and scope of the inspiration of Holy Writ. He used Quenstedt's quotation as a summary of his own posture on the matter:

The holy canonical Scriptures in their original text are the infallible truth and free from every error. That is to say, in the sacred canonical Scriptures there is no lie, no deceit, no error, even the slightest, either in content or in words, but every single word handed down in the Scriptures is most true, whether it pertains to doctrine, ethics, history, chronology, topography, or onomastics; and no ignorance, lack of understanding, forgetfulness, or lapse of memory, can or should be attributed to the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit in their writing of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>13</sup>

Again Robert Preus details Walther's position and what that posture suggests:

The fact that Scripture says exactly what God wants it to say may be considered the reason or the ground or the basis of inerrancy of Scripture. But it does not tell us what inerrancy is.

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<sup>12</sup>Dallman, et al, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup>Preus, p. 686.



What, then, does Walther mean by the inerrancy of Scripture? He means what the church has always meant, that all the declarative statements of Scripture are true, that they correspond to fact, that they correspond (as the case may be) to what has happened or to what will happen or to what obtains. Everyting which is presented in Scripture as factual is factual. There can be no falsehood, no mistake, no slip, in Scripture. A correlate of the above is that there are no contradictions in the Holy Scripture.<sup>14</sup>

Walther stated his own case as follows:

It is absolutely necessary that we maintain the doctrine of inspiration as taught by our orthodox dogmaticians. If the possibility that Scripture contained the least error were admitted, it would become the business of man to sift the truth from the error. That places man over Scripture, and Scripture is no longer the source and norm of doctrine. Human reason is made the norma of truth, and Scripture is degraded to the position of a norma normata. The least deviation from the old inspiration doctrine introduces a rationalistic germ into theology and infects the whole body of doctrine.<sup>15</sup>

Walther saw himself as simply continuing in the vein of Lutheran scholars before him. Like the venerated orthodox Lutherans of yesterday, he viewed himself as maintaining the old standard. Walther was unbending in this posture; for the orthodox or Bible theologian the inerrancy of Scripture was an a priori. This put him at odds, some held, with science. This charge left Walther undaunted:

If the conclusions of science disagree with the statements of Scripture, the conclusions of science must be false. In other words, it is impossible for Scripture to err. We must believe what Scripture says on all points, before any empirical proofs are offered. And why must this be our attitude? Because Scripture is God speaking. "Whoever believes with all his heart that the Bible is God's Word cannot believe anything else than that it is inerrant (irrthumslos)."<sup>16</sup>

For Walther any other view of Scripture denies the inspiration of Scripture. The Word of God would then become a mere book that man must judge. Man, then, would be forced to distinguish the true from the deceptive word. The individual would hence be required to separate

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 685-86.

<sup>15</sup>Dallman, et al, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Preus. p. 686.

the unessential from what belongs to the history of salvation. In brief, for C. F. W. Walther, to question the verbal, plenary, understanding of inspiration or inerrancy of the original manuscripts undermines all confidence in the foundation of the apostles and prophets.<sup>17</sup>

Walther continued uncompromising in this stance:

The Holy Spirit has inspired the Scriptures and placed everything there deliberately. Here our church confesses that every word, every arrangement of words, every reiteration of words, every summation, the entire way and manner of speaking [of Scripture] has its origin in the Holy Spirit. He has inspired everything, not just the basic truths, not just the sense and meaning, not just the "what" but also the "how." And it was He who has chosen the words which were necessary to reveal correctly to us God's meaning.<sup>18</sup>

The authors of Walther and the Church elevate the following insight. Walther held forth for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, not merely to discharge some duty laid upon him as a Christian theologian by Holy Writ but for this reason:

Scripture was so sacred to him because it bears the Gospel of salvation. Scripture took him captive by this, that the Gospel of grace took him captive. Dr. Walther was a Gospel theologian. His chief interest lay in bringing the Gospel of grace to the sinner and in training men for this one great work of the Christian Church.<sup>19</sup>

Dallman, Dau and Engelder point out that Dr. Walther refused to surrender one tittle of the doctrine of the verbal, plenary, inspiration of the Scriptures and cite two basic reasons for this:

[1.] For one thing, the Bible plainly teaches it. It is an important doctrine because it is a Bible doctrine. But there is another consideration. [2.] The supreme importance of this doctrine lies in its relation to Scripture as the source and norm of all doctrine. If Scripture is not . . . in the actual, plain meaning of the term, God's Word, it cannot serve as the source and norm of doctrine. . . . "If the original Scriptures were not inerrant, the whole record is rendered untrustworthy; . . ."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Dallman, et al, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 671.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

The authors here are asserting simply that for C. F. W. Walther Christian certainty rests on the authority of Scripture and the authority of Scripture rests on the fact of their being the verbally inspired Word of God. They conclude:

The Church of the Reformation stands on the rock of Holy Scripture, on the sola Scriptura. But she stands there, and can stand there, only because she identifies Scripture with God's Word.<sup>21</sup>

#### On The Clarity of Holy Scripture

C. F. W. Walther steadfastly contended that Scriptures were not only the sole criterion for determining theology and the entire Christian vocation but also that these Scriptures were the clear Word of God. To Walther, it was a simple denial of God's universal grace to state or imply that the Word of God does not clearly teach all of the articles of the faith in the most perspicuous way possible. Dr. Walther stands with Luther in this conviction:

No book on earth is so clear as the Holy Scriptures. It excels every other book just as the sun excels every other light. . . . It is a shocking disgrace, blasphemy against the Holy Scriptures and all Christendom, to say that the Holy Scriptures are obscure and not clear enough to enable everyone to understand and then to teach and prove what he believes.<sup>22</sup>

Walther, like Luther before him, understood that the authority and clarity of Scripture go together. When the transparency of the Word of God is questioned, the authority of Scripture is ultimately undermined. For at an alleged area of obscurity the church must intervene, in order to interpret this dark writing to the common people. Some, at this juncture, turn and consult higher criticism or scientific exegesis. In this process the church or the interpreter becomes the authority.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>Preus, p. 681.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 680.

This is both unnecessary and undesirable for even though there are a few passages that seem unclear all doctrines of faith are set forth in lucid, comprehensible terms in another passage. In his reprinted article in the 1939 Concordia Theological Monthly, Walther stated his thinking in clear terms:

The clarity and perspicuity of Scripture are vindicated by this particular point: all doctrines of faith, although some of them are referred to in a few obscure Scripture passages, are without exception expressed in clear, unambiguous words, which enable the conscientious Bible student to understand the obscure passages. A denial of this is a denial of the clarity of Scripture, a denial that we really have a sure prophetic apostolic Word, a light that shines in a dark place, a sun that comes out of his chamber like a bridegroom and rejoices like a strong man to run his course; a sure testimony of the Lord, making wise the simple; the commandments of the Lord, rejoicing the heart and enlightening the eyes (2 Pet.1; Ps. 19).<sup>24</sup>

Walther stoutly maintained that, while there are areas of partial obscurity in Scriptures, any book of the Bible can be readily understood by an open-minded diligent student:

The clarity and perspicuity of Scripture make it possible for any one to understand any book of the Bible; nevertheless, the Bible student must read carefully, search earnestly, be free from prejudice, be open-minded and receptive to the truth. Therefore the apostle wrote: "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. 4:3,4. Is it not shocking when people ascribe to the alleged obscurity and ambiguity of the Scriptures what is merely the result of human blindness and malice or at any rate of human weakness?<sup>25</sup>

Refuting the "papist" claim of obscurity in the Scriptures Walther stated:

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<sup>24</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Question," Concordia Theological Monthly 10 (November 1939):830.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 831.

In the first place, we distinguish between a total and a partial obscurity. We admit that there is a partial obscurity, i.e., we take into account those passages of Holy Scripture that are obscure and present difficulties which we cannot satisfactorily solve. . . we deny that the Holy Scriptures are totally obscure and maintain especially that every dogma pertaining to faith and morals is set forth somewhere in Holy Writ in language so clear and unequivocal that any one who searches the Bible conscientiously can know and believe it. In the second place, we distinguish between subjective and objective obscurity and say that Holy Writ is not obscure eo ipso nor with respect to the object that must be known if faith in the true God is to be engendered.<sup>26</sup>

Walther reminds us that Luther himself testifies repeatedly that apparent obscurities in Scripture are due most often to the student's imperfect knowledge of the language and is therefore not an objective darkness but one that is almost entirely a subjective obscurity.<sup>27</sup>

Walther again quoted Luther to reiterate this important concern:

It is a shocking disgrace, blasphemy against the Holy Scriptures and all Christendom, to say that Holy Scripture is obscure and not clear enough to enable every one to understand it and then teach and prove what he believes . . . if there is an obscure passage in Scripture, do not doubt but that the same truth lies hidden in it that is very clear in another passage. Whoever, therefore, cannot understand the obscure ought to abide by the clear.<sup>28</sup>

Walther had contended earlier:

Scripture is the complete revelation of the way of salvation; therefore it must be clear, exact, and unambiguous in all articles of faith. Whoever denies this fact denies the fundamental doctrine of the clarity of Scripture.<sup>29</sup>

Walther readily admits that there is darkness and obscurity in some believers and certainly in the unregenerate reader when they, without understanding, without the blessing of the Holy Spirit, set out to do exegesis. It must be remembered, however, that the darkness is in them and not in God's Word, and ". . . such a person cannot grasp

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<sup>26</sup>ibid., p. 829.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 830-31.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 828.

any of the saving doctrine of Scripture unless the Spirit of God enlightens him through the Word."<sup>30</sup> Without this enlightenment the interpreter is destined to confusion even to deeming the Word itself as foolishness (Jer. 8:8,9; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:3,4).<sup>31</sup> In his "The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Question," President Walther concluded by stating what he views as the Evangelical Lutheran posture on this matter:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in her whole theology stands upon the principle that the Scripture is clear and plain in all doctrines of faith. Therefore she lets Scripture speak for itself and judges doctrines by the clear Word of God.<sup>32</sup>

#### On Interpretation of Scripture

For Walther, next to clarity of Scripture and closely related in importance is the principle that Scripture is its own interpreter. The Scriptures are not open to any private interpretation but are dependent upon other passages for elucidation or clarification. In doing his hermeneutics Walther would allow for only one meaning of a specific passage in its specific setting. He disallowed the possibility of any real contradictions in Scripture whatsoever and held that Scripture be interpreted by certain clear texts. These texts substantiate certain specific articles of faith (Rom. 12:6) and all subsequent less clear Scripture must be interpreted according to this analogy. His rationale for this approach was that this is the method Jesus himself employed (Matt. 4:5-7) against the temptation of Satan.<sup>33</sup>

W. G. Polack sets forth Walther's method in these words:

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<sup>30</sup>Preus, p. 680.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Walther, p. 832.

<sup>33</sup>Preus, p. 683.

Therefore also as to interpreting the Scripture his principle was: Scripture is to be explained by Scripture; in other words, the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the Scriptures must explain Himself, must be His own Interpreter, just as every man must be, and is, the best interpreter of his own words.<sup>34</sup>

Walther opposed "any theory of doctrinal development which was to him veiled skepticism" and unbelief.<sup>35</sup> Constantly behind all of his disputations concerning the authority of Scripture were certain specific and pragmatic concerns:

First, he wishes to maintain that a Christian can be sure of his doctrine. Second, he wishes to maintain the possibility of an orthodox visible church. Such concerns make it impossible for him to entertain any theory of doctrinal development which is but veiled skepticism and condemns the church to the dreary life of seeking but never finding the truth, like Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a great stone up a mountain only to see it plummet down.<sup>36</sup>

Walther held another practical concern:

The third and most important reason for Walther's firm stand on the divine origin of Scripture is purely practical. He desires poor sinners through patience and comfort of the Scriptures to have hope. But there can be no comfort, no certainty, in the church when theologians have forsaken the doctrine that Scripture is God's revelation.<sup>37</sup>

In his polemics for the authority and divine origin of the Bible, Walther clung tenaciously to his doctrine of the inerrancy of Scriptures:

Whoever thinks that he can find one error in holy Scripture does not believe in holy Scripture but in himself; for even if he accepted everything else as true, he would believe it not because Scripture says so but because it agrees with his reason or with his sentiments.<sup>38</sup>

Robert Preus states:

Inerrancy also touches the matter of interpretation. Walther believed that the New Testament interpretation of the Old was necessarily correct, for it was an inspired interpretation. To him any

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<sup>34</sup>Polack, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup>Preus, p. 684.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 676.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 689

suggestion that the apostles took liberties or did not fully understand its meaning when interpreting the Old Testament was an outright denial of Scripture. There were many theologians in those days who did not hesitate to criticize the exegesis of the apostles in the New Testament. . . . Walther felt that such a spirit betrayed a lack of faith in God's Word, Scripture. Christ promised that His apostles would be preserved from all error. Therefore their exposition of the Old Testament was authentic.<sup>39</sup>

For Walther the matter was clear and simple; man makes mistakes but the Holy Spirit cannot. Therefore he states:

It is not Isaiah, not Moses, not Paul, who speaks in Scripture, but the Holy Spirit. With men it may happen that once in a while an expression falls which is not entirely correct, but this does not happen with the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup>

For Walther the authority of Scripture becomes completely meaningful to man only when he discovers how practical and helpful God's Word was meant to be. The Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, is all-sufficient, that is, it aids and directs the believer in every aspect of his Christian existence.<sup>41</sup>

Scripture fits us, equips us, sufficiently and perfectly for our Christian sojourn. It provides wisdom and guidance, strength and comfort in every issue of life. As St. Paul says, "It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). But the purpose of Scripture also is to bring us to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:31; 5:46, 47; Heb. 1:2).<sup>42</sup>

Walther was convinced that the true believer should build all of his theology upon the Scripture as God's clear Word. This is the only sound platform for Christian theological endeavor. The Scripture alone is normative for drawing theological conclusions.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 686-87.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 671.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 679.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 678.



Do not think that it does not matter when you in one or the other point depart from the clear Word of God. Rather believe that if you leave or deny the truth of God in one point, you leave and deny it all.<sup>44</sup>

### On the Law and the Gospel

Robert C. Schultz, in his article "The Distinction Between Law and Gospel," called the revival of the theology of orthodoxy and the teachings of the reformers the decisive event in the life of the nineteenth century Lutheran Church. The early immigrant founders of the Missouri Synod were themselves a part of this wave of Lutheran restoration zeal that swept across Germany. Schultz pens this interesting observation:

The degree of the restoration's understanding of the Reformation can easily be measured by the awareness and application of the distinction between Law and Gospel.<sup>45</sup>

In short, when the restorationists understood the Reformation, they knew the importance of her chief exegetical principle. He asserts that it is within this milieu that C. F. W. Walther's contributions can best be understood.

Like Luther before him, Walther's ardent desire was to restore and perpetuate pure doctrine. To perpetuate pure doctrine requires the knowledge and application of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Luther said of this matter:

You, however, have already often heard that there is no better way of handing on and preserving the pure doctrine than the method

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<sup>44</sup>Eggold, p. 79.

<sup>45</sup>Robert C. Schultz, "The Distinction Between Law and Gospel," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):592.

we follow, i.e., we divide Christian teaching into two parts, into the Law and the Gospel.<sup>46</sup>

Schultz understood the task of the orthodox exegete and placed Walther's contribution in perspective. The meaning of Walther's understanding of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel can be fully understood, Schultz contends, only when it is viewed as an attempt to recover the doctrine of Martin Luther and the Lutheran Symbolical writings contained in the Book of Concord. Walther's intent was to restate Luther's pure doctrine and correct understanding of God's Word in a form that would present Luther's doctrines free from the leading distortions of the day: orthodoxy (the dead orthodoxy of the eighteenth century), rationalism, and Pietism.<sup>47</sup> Schultz notes: "Walther's specific contribution was in restating the significance of this distinction for preaching and pastoral work."<sup>48</sup>

To Walther, pure doctrine was simply God's Word and Luther's doctrine clearly and properly set forth. The chief article of Walther's theology, as previously stated, was:

That man becomes righteous and blessed before God by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, and through faith alone, without any merit or worthiness, [this] is the chief doctrine of all Christendom. Yes, it is the real kernel of the whole Christian religion whereby it is differentiated from each and every other religion in the world.<sup>49</sup>

In Schultz' article, "The Distinction Between the Law and Gospel," he declared that one thing is evident: the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the clearest systematic expressions of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone formulated by the Lutheran

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 591.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 592.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Erwin Lueker, "Justification in the Theology of Walther," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961): 598.

Reformation. This understanding became one of the reformer's basic hermeneutical principles.<sup>50</sup>

To C. F. W. Walther the doctrine of Scripture was crucial to Lutheran theology. The doctrine of Scripture must center in justification by grace through faith by properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel. Walther properly contended that it is not sufficient merely to present all of the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but Law and Gospel must be rightly distinguished. Schultz states:

Walther clearly recognized just what is really at stake in the exegesis of Scripture in the distinction between Law and Gospel. These I and IV state this decisively: "The doctrinal contents of the entire Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, are made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other, viz., the Law and the Gospel. . . . The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but also a knowledge without which Scripture is and remains a sealed book."<sup>51</sup>

From this vantage point, in the theology of Walther there surface two distinct attributes of the nature of God: His justice and His grace. Walther contends these two attributes are opposites and yet each is equally of the essence of God. Henry Eggold mirrors Walther's contention when he declares: "According to His justice, God is inviolably holy, righteous and true; according to His grace, He is full of love and mercy."<sup>52</sup> There are likewise two messages or doctrines, Walther asserts, in the Word of God. There is the expression of God's righteousness, holiness, and justice known as the Law, and the manifestation of His goodness, mercy, and grace called the Gospel. Walther writes of the proper way for the Lutheran Church to preach:

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<sup>50</sup>Schultz, p. 591.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 597.

<sup>52</sup>Eggold, p. 82.

It preaches the Law to the godless in such a way as if there were no Gospel at all; and the Gospel to penitent sinners in such a way as if there had never been a Law. It allows the Law and its preaching to precede not in such a manner that a person, say a year later, in a new congregation should hear only Law to make people pliable, but in such a way that in every sermon sin is everywhere made thoroughly sinful, but that, at the same time, immediately that is heard which makes the sinner blessed, namely, the doctrine of justification.<sup>53</sup>

Walther continually insisted no man can enter the kingdom of grace until he has first come to know his condition. He is a poor sinner lost and undone and under the wrath of a righteous and holy God. This he learns from the Law. Schultz observed:

So many people within the church who enjoy a full knowledge of the Scripture never come to a living and joyful Christianity because they wish to have either a Law without Gospel or a Gospel without Law. Walther sees very clearly that the Law is necessary to a man's knowledge of himself. He is equally clear on the fact that the Law teaches us that God's reaction to sinful man is wrath and anger. These are not empty phrases but terrible truths.<sup>54</sup>

Walther adamantly rejected the rationalists view of God as a loving permissive father. The pioneer leader of the Missouri Synod pointed out that our God is a "holy and righteous being. He really hates sin, and His wrath really burns because of it to the lowest depths of hell."<sup>55</sup>

Walther held that the Scriptures declare in the doctrine of the Law that all men are under sin and are worthy of eternal wrath and death. The Gospel declares, however, that for Christ's sake God offers forgiveness of sin and justification which are received through faith.

Walther's doctrine of justification by grace through faith declares that the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness in the sight of God, and eternal salvation, are obtained in no other

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<sup>53</sup>Lueker, p. 605.

<sup>54</sup>Schultz, p. 593.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

way than by the believer's putting confidence in the word of God and through faith laying hold on the promises of God in Christ Jesus.

Acts 4:11, 12 states ". . . for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (RSV). C. F. W. Walther views these Scriptures as clearly stating that through faith the believer lays hold on the name of Jesus: the expression "the name" means that which is cited as the cause of man's salvation. To cite the name, or to call on the name of Christ Jesus is to declare a trust in Christ as the cause or the price on account of which we are saved. In speaking of justification by grace through faith there are three elements that belong together:

1. The promise of God's forgiveness.
2. Salvation is a free gift.
3. The price, and the sole propitiation for man's sin, is the merit of Christ.

To summarize Walther's theology, we are justified, made right, by grace through faith, that is laying hold on the promises of God alone. Justification in this sense is to be understood as making the unrighteous man righteous or that which effects his regeneration. It is evident, therefore, that man is justified before God by grace through faith alone. For through faith alone we receive the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation for Christ's sake. And this reconciliation or justification is something promised of Christ, not because of works of the Law. Therefore, it is received through faith alone.

By freely accepting the forgiveness of sins, faith sets against God's wrath not any merit of the penitent sinner but the merits of Christ, our mediator and propitiator. This faith by the power of the Holy Spirit clings to the promise of God's forgiving love; frees the

believer from death, purifies the heart, and removes from the believer the desire to sin, brings forth a new life in the heart, is a work of the Holy Spirit, and makes all things new.<sup>56</sup> For C. F. W. Walther this is the good news.

#### When and How the Gospel is to be Applied

When any person is in terror on account of his sins, he is a proper subject for the application of the Gospel.<sup>57</sup> A crushed sinner, such as the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, should immediately receive the consoling message of God's grace and the forgiveness of sins. The glad tidings of righteousness, life and salvation must be preached to the brokenhearted who are already in terror because of their sins. When sinners were struck down and terrified by the Law, both Jesus and His apostles immediately applied the Gospel. This is our example and it should be faithfully followed.<sup>58</sup> We must realize that the man who has been made desperate, smarting under the Law's judgment, will receive the Gospel with joy. At this point, the consolation of the Gospel must be generously offered to even the greatest sinner. When anyone is terrified on account of his sin, the wrath of God and hell, he is fully prepared to receive the Gospel.<sup>59</sup> Walther encourages the bearer of glad tidings to apply the Gospel generously to this prepared heart.

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<sup>56</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), pp. 211, 223.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-3.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

### CHAPTER III

#### WALTHER: ON UNCONDITIONAL CONFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION

In C. F. W. Walther's letters from Zurich he makes an interesting assertion in comparing the unionism rampant in Europe and the unity realized in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

An entirely different kind [of unity], in contrast, is that in which our synod stands. Pupils of the same teachers, of a Luther and his faithful followers, we have come to the clear knowledge and living conviction that our dear Evangelical Lutheran Church, as she has set forth her doctrine in her Confessions, agreeing in all points with the Word of God, is the continuation of the old, apostolic church; in short, at the present time the only orthodox church.<sup>1</sup>

Walther maintained the task of the theologians of Christ's church was clear: It is not to create something new but to urge the return to the old paths of Luther, that is, to God's pure Word and Luther's doctrine as contained in the Lutheran Confessions and to remain firmly grounded there. Walther's dogged determination to do this earned him the scorn of some of his contemporaries and the label of a "repristinating citationist":

Walther's loyalty to Lutheranism . . . appears in his copious use of orthodox Lutheran sources. He was called a repristinating citation theologian because of it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "Walther's Letters from Zurich," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):651-52.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "Walther and the Scripture," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):583.

The masthead of the first and following editions of his widely read parish paper, Der Lutheraner, bore this watchword: "God's Word and Luther's doctrine shall never pass away."<sup>3</sup> Walther taught the dual Loyalties of God's Word and Luther's doctrine. Luther's doctrine, for Walther, included an unswerving loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions.<sup>4</sup>

For Walther loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions meant loyalty to Luther's Reformation. This conviction he shared with Martin Chemnitz, Johann Gerhard, and all the great teachers of the Lutheran Church up to the age of Pietism. But loyalty to Luther's Reformation was important to Walther only because Luther was loyal to the Scriptures. For that reason he insisted that Lutheran pastors, teachers, and professors should subscribe unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of the Lutheran Church.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Carl Piepkorn in his work "Walther and the Lutheran Symbols" places Walther's assessment of the place of the symbols in perspective. Walther, in his article on unconditional subscription, holds that the symbols are the confession of the church's faith. This is precisely what they were created to be and nothing more or less. Because the symbols are the correct interpretations of what the Scriptures teach on all articles of faith an unconditional subscription to the symbols is the solemn declaration which any pastor or teacher makes who genuinely desires to serve the church.

This pledge is to the effect:

(1) that he accepts the doctrinal content of our Symbolical Books because he recognizes the fact that they are in full agreement with the Sacred Scriptures and do not militate against the Sacred Scriptures at any point, either of major or of minor importance, and

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<sup>3</sup>Henry J. Eggold, "Walther, the Preacher," Th.D. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1962., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Spitz, p. 583.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 584.



(2) that he therefore heartily believes in this divine truth and is determined to preach this doctrine without adulteration.<sup>6</sup>

Walther insists:

An unconditional subscription refers to the whole content of the Symbols and does not allow the subscriber to make any mental reservation in any point -- even if the doctrine in question is discussed only incidentally in support of another teaching. At the same time, the subscriber's commitment does not involve matters which do not belong in the realm of doctrine. . . . He is not committed to the Symbol's exegesis of a particular passage of the Sacred Scriptures, but his subscription is an affirmation that the interpretations in the Symbols are in accordance with the analogy of the faith.<sup>7</sup>

In short, the pledging pastor or teacher simply affirms without any mental reservations that: these confessions are in full agreement with and are an accurate interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures and are not contrary to Scripture at any point. The pledging pastor should affirm that this too is my doctrine and I heartily believe it and intend to preach it.<sup>8</sup>

Piepkorn astutely points out that Walther and his followers did not want the symbols to be regarded as the basis of their faith, for only the Sacred Scriptures can be the basis of a believer's faith. They held, rather, that confessions do not make doctrine but reflect and confess doctrines.<sup>9</sup>

Robert Preus captures Walther's intent here:

The doctrines embodied in the Symbols were not included in the various articles in order that they might become doctrines of the Church but were included because they already were doctrines of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Walther and the Lutheran Symbols," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):610-11.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 611.      <sup>8</sup>Ibid.      <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 614.

<sup>10</sup>Robert D. Preus, "Walther and the Scriptures," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (November 1961):684.

It is important to keep this distinction clear for the opposite view would place the confessions above the Bible and make the Lutheran Church a sect.

For Walther and his Evangelical Lutheran Church the pledge of unconditional commitment to the Lutheran Confessions was an essential safeguard to the congregation:

It is to be noted well with reference to the obligation of the preachers upon the Symbolical Books of the church that this is one of the chief defenses of the congregation against having the preachers make themselves lords over the congregation's faith. . . . All false teachers say that they will teach according to the Sacred Scriptures. But if the preachers will not allow themselves to be obligated upon the public confessions of the orthodox church, the congregations have no guarantee that their preachers will not proclaim papistic, Calvinist . . . and similar doctrines, and the congregations will have no basis for accusing them and deposing them for bad faith.<sup>11</sup>

In support of this view Walther quotes Frederick Rambach:

[By requiring of our preachers and teachers through a written statement of intention] to teach only according to them [the Confessions] we are merely seeking a guarantee that our church will have in its teachers upright ministers and pastors, and not foxes and wolves. No one is exerting any absolute compulsion on [the candidate], and if he is reluctant to subscribe to the Symbols, he can go off and earn his livelihood some other way. But if he has committed himself to them and afterwards departs from them, he cannot any longer claim to be an honorable man unless he resigns and lays down his office.<sup>12</sup>

Walther, through Confessional Subscription sought to protect the church from unprincipled individuals who would be lords over the congregation's faith. He wanted effective internal controls for the maintenance of peace and of good order. Walther, above all, wanted to assure that the pure Word of God might be preached in every Evangelical Lutheran congregation. He urged that congregations not receive pastors who

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<sup>11</sup>Piepkorn, p. 614-15.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 614.

would not obligate themselves unconditionally to the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Piepkorn quotes Walther's conclusions on this aspect of unconditional subscription in the following paragraph:

If therefore a Lutheran congregation prizes the pure doctrine of the divine Word, its Creed, its Christian freedom, its good order, and its peace, it should in that same degree insist that it will not receive a preacher who will not let himself be obligated on our precious Book of Concord.<sup>13</sup>

To Walther an unconditional subscription to the confessions of the church was essential. A simple appeal to sacred Scripture, since all parties and sects in Christendom were making this appeal, was considered inadequate. The Papists, the Enthusiasts, the Rationalists as well as the orthodox followers of Luther were making the same claim. Piepkorn correctly points out that Walther simply asserted that the Lutheran Confessions are the correct interpretation of Scripture:

Walther criticizes as fallacious the contention that there is no better interpretation of the Symbols than that which is according to the Sacred Scripture. The church must insist that her teachers interpret the Sacred Scriptures according to the Symbols and not vice versa. If it did not do so it would be making the personal conviction of each teacher its symbol.<sup>14</sup>

In short, Walther says the symbols do agree with the Scriptures and are the correct exposition and interpretation of Scripture and by their very nature and spirit are unconditionally binding on the pastors and teachers of the church. To avoid error and confusion and in order to protect herself and her children the church must require of her teachers and pastors an unconditional commitment to the Lutheran Confessions for:

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 615.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 612.

A subscription to the confessions is the Church's assurance that its teachers have recognized the interpretation and understanding of Scripture which is embodied in the Symbols as correct and will therefore interpret Scripture as the Church interprets it.<sup>15</sup>

Erwin Lueker rightly adds that in view of the foregoing in a point of controversy, it is not correct to ask: What does this or that 'father' of the Lutheran Church teach in his private writings? for he also may have fallen into error.<sup>16</sup> According to Walther, the correct question is:

What does the public CONFESSION of the Lutheran Church teach concerning the controverted point? For in her confessions our Church has recorded for all times what she believes, teaches, and confesses . . . .<sup>17</sup>

Walther believed unconditional Confessional Subscription is necessary therefore:

(1) To enable our church clearly and unequivocally to confess its faith and its doctrine before the world; (2) to differentiate it from every heterodox body and sect; and (3) to give it a united, certain, general form and norm of doctrine for all its teachers, on the basis of which all other writings and teachings can be judged and tested. All this implies an unconditional commitment to the Symbols.<sup>18</sup>

Walther delivered the Jubilee sermon in "Old Trinity" Church commemorating the 350th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 1880.<sup>19</sup> Using Ps. 119:106 as his text and theme, he raised the question: "Why can and should we today gladly swear to the Lord that we will faithfully abide by the confession of our church in our own time?"<sup>20</sup> His

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<sup>15</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church," Concordia Theological Monthly 18 (April 1947):246.

<sup>16</sup>Erwin L. Lueker, "Walther and the Free Conference," Concordia Theological Monthly 15 (August 1944):556, n. 40.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Piepkorn, p. 612.

<sup>19</sup>Spitz, p. 584.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

initial assertion in answering his own rhetorical question may best capture Walther's thinking and affection for his church and her symbols:

Because the confession of our Evangelical Lutheran Church is nothing else than the confessions of God's own pure Word; . . . we have the sacred duty to preserve and to hand this confession down to our children and our grandchildren pure and undiminished as a treasure committed to us.<sup>21</sup>

In this fashion, Walther maintained a lifelong desire to urge his brethren to return to the Old Paths through obedience to God's Word and Unconditional Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions.

Dr. Carl Piepkorn contributes this distillation of Walther's contribution to Confessional Subscription:

On the basis of rigorous logic he demanded an unqualified subscription to the Lutheran Symbols from all those who served the church, on the ground that anything less than this is without real meaning and imperils both the doctrinal basis and the spiritual freedom of the Christian community. He himself exemplified his requirement; he knew, used, revered, and was determined to follow the Symbols.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Piepkorn, p. 620.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN AMPLIFICATION OF THE SCHEMATIC OF C. F. W. WALTHER'S

#### THE PROPER DISTINCTION BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL

C. F. W. Walther's The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel is of central importance to this study. Walther's work has been carefully studied. It is the intention of this writer to set forth its theses and propositions in a readable systematic distillation. This reduction takes the form of a full content schematic. It is the author's aim to accomplish this condensation in such a manner that the various thetical assertions are unfolded in a natural arrangement, and in systematic detail. This process allows closer scrutiny of the Walther theses and an objective discovery of the work's central core.

It is this writer's hypothesis that Walther's work can be distilled into a condensate or gist. This condensation of Walther's Law and Gospel will then be schematized into a set of apparatuses, criteria, or rhetorical paradigms by which certain judgments can be made answering the vital question: Does this sermon properly distinguish between Law and Gospel?

#### The Gist of Walther: Preface

As much as possible, the language of the extract is Walther's. Yet, of necessity, there is some paraphrasing and sentence reconstructing. In the schematic per se considerable pains were taken to unfold

Walther's thetical assertions systematically and in detail. This afforded both the writer and the reader the most perspicuous perspective while engaging the analytical process. Now, with this instrument before us, it is our intention to digest the schematic to its mere core. The final pages and the comprehensive summary at the end of the digest embody the theology of C. F. W. Walther reduced to its simple gist. It is from this distillation of Walther's thought that a set of criteria, or rhetorical or interrogatorial paradigms will be constructed through which certain judgments can be applied to the vital question: "Does this sermon properly distinguish between Law and Gospel?"

#### The Gist of Walther

The doctrinal content of the entire Holy Scripture consists of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other: the Law and the Gospel. There are a number of points of difference in the two doctrines. They differ in regard to the manner of their being revealed to man. Man was created with the Law already written in his heart but the Gospel is completely foreign to man and is received by the grace of God in simple faith. The Law and the Gospel differ also in their content in that the Law tells us what we ought to do and the Gospel tells us what God is doing. In the third place the Law and the Gospel differ by reason of their promise: they both promise everlasting life and salvation. The promises of the Law are made on the condition that we fulfill the Law perfectly while the Gospel promises us the grace of God and salvation without any condition at all. Also, the Law and the Gospel differ as relates to threats; for the Law contains threats exclusively while the Gospel contains no threats whatever. The Law and the Gospel differ

concerning the effects of the two doctrines. There are three effects of the Law: The Law tells us what to do but fails to tell us how to comply with its demands. This causes us to become more unwilling to keep the Law and the effect is to increase the lust for sinning. The Law reveals man's sins to him but offers no help to him to get free of them. The effect is that man falls into a dilemma and is hurled into despair. The Law produces contrition for the wrath of God conjures up the terror of hell and death but offers no comfort whatever. If no additional teaching besides the Law is applied, the sinner must despair and perish in his sin.

The Gospel has three effects. 1) When the Gospel demands faith it offers and gives faith in its very demand. We preach faith and any person not willfully resisting obtains faith. 2) The Gospel does not censure or reprove sinners but rather removes terror and anguish and fills the sinner with joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. The Gospel does not require that man furnish anything good to receive its blessings. The Gospel demands nothing of man but plants love in his heart and makes man capable of all good work.

The final point of difference between Law and Gospel relates to the persons to whom either doctrine is to be preached and the end towards which it is proclaimed. The Law is preached to secure sinners; to bring them to repentance. The Gospel is preached to alarmed sinners to bring them comfort and salvation.

"What or who is an orthodox teacher?" This is an underlying question C. F. W. Walther raises in his Friday evening lectures. The seminary president answers his rhetorical inquiry in this manner: Only he who presents all the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture,



and also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel is an orthodox teacher. Scripture requires that we have the Word of God absolutely unadulterated. This is what Walther means by correct preaching. This is presenting the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture. There is, however, one further equally significant measurement of the orthodox or evangelical preacher: in addition to the former he must rightly distinguish between Law and Gospel. For Walther, this is the final test of a proper sermon: its value depends not only on that every statement in it be taken from the Word of God and in agreement with this Word, but also on this: that the Law and the Gospel be rightly divided in it.

Walther insists that rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is the most difficult and the highest art of Christians in general and of theology in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the School of Experience. This doctrine is readily learned but difficult to apply. The proctor of the mastery of this doctrine is not the human intellect but the Holy Spirit.

The pastor must first of all learn to apply this doctrine to himself in his own life situation and then to others. This application must be made to each person in season consisting of exactly what he needs of Law or Gospel.

The pastor must learn to minister the Law and the Gospel both privately and publicly or corporately. In preaching, the pastor must preach in such a way that every hearer feels, "He means me." This is accomplished as the preacher understands how to depict accurately the inward condition of every one of his hearers.

In private ministration the difficulty is greater still. In a personal interview or counseling situation the pastor may perceive more readily whether or not an individual is truly a Christian yet a pastor may be deceived by a pious hypocrite. A good rule of thumb is this: a pastor must treat any person as a Christian when he appears to be and vice versa.

Non-Christians differ so considerably that we must remember that a preacher can be truly fitted out for his calling only by the Holy Spirit. Finally, the greatest difficulty is encountered in dealing with true Christians according to their spiritual condition.

Walther continues to assert that the true knowledge of the distinction between Law and Gospel is not only a glorious light affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scripture, but without this knowledge Scripture is, and remains, a sealed book. Until the reader learns the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, the Scriptures are to him full of contradictions that on the one hand seem to bless the reader and on the other to condemn him. The moment we understand the distinction between the Law and the Gospel, it is as if the sun were rising upon the Scriptures. Then can we see all the contents of the Scriptures in the most beautiful harmony.

Once we gain the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, we understand the purpose of the Law better. The purpose of the Law is to teach us that we are utterly unable to fulfill the Law for "through the Law comes a knowledge of sin . . ." The Law convinces us of our ungodliness and hence puts us on the way to salvation. For at the point we become crushed, penitent sinners, we at once become proper subjects for the Gospel. Once we know what a sweet message the Gospel is, we

receive it with exuberant joy. Here Walther reminds us that the Law has not been abolished, rather it plays the significant role of bringing man to repentance through being confronted with the knowledge of sin. Paul never said the Law was abolished. When the Jews missed this teaching, they became the enemies of the Gospel.

Walther enumerated the ways man can confound Law and Gospel. The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is the one most easily recognized; and the grossest. This error represents Christ as a new Moses or lawgiver. This turns the Gospel into a doctrine of meritorious works. Those who promulgate this error see the Gospel as a new set of Laws like unto those Moses prescribed. This cannot be. If Christ had given us additional laws, they would only serve to drive us to despair. It would not be good news.

Christ came, rather, to proclaim forgiveness to all who receive Him. Christ states the Gospel in concrete terms. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Christ has destroyed the kingdom of the devil and accomplished salvation for us. All that man has to do is to know that he has no more to do than believe and accept this message and rejoice over it with all his heart. Now that the rule of the devil has been destroyed, anything that I must do cannot come into consideration. The devil's domination is destroyed and I am free. When the Scripture says "believe," it means simply receive or appropriate what Christ has done for you. In other words, "Claim as your own what Christ has acquired" for we have forgiveness of sin by the grace of God for the sake of Jesus Christ. The Christian religion says: "You are a lost and condemned sinner: you cannot be your own Savior." Do not despair for Christ has acquired salvation for you on that account.

Christ did not introduce any new laws nor abrogate the Law of Moses. Christ opened up the spiritual meaning of the Law. It was not His intent to issue new laws but to fulfill the Law for us, so that we might share His fulfillment.

Again, Walther suggests that the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is not preached in its full sternness and the Gospel not in its full sweetness, when on the contrary, Gospel elements are mingled with the Law and Law with the Gospel. Walther contends that righteousness is of faith that it may be of Grace. Men become righteous in the sight of God through faith. Men become righteous gratuitously by grace, that is, by God's making righteousness a gift to him. Faith must never be seen as a little work men do to distinguish those who go to heaven from those who go to hell. This turns salvation into a work of man and the Gospel becomes Law. Faith is just reaching out the hand to receive God's gift of salvation. Gospel must not be mingled with Law. The Law, to be rightly preached, must be proclaimed in such a manner that there remains in it nothing pleasant to the lost and condemned sinners. The Law is shamefully perverted when injected by any Grace or Gospel element for there is no sweetness at all in the Law, for the Law makes no concessions but only demands. The Law is spiritual and it is addressed to the spirit and not to the flesh. The spirit in man to which the Law is directed is his will, heart and affections. There are no exceptions to this rule.

A proper preaching of the Law must measure up to certain requirements. Testify against vice with great earnestness, but keep it in perspective and do not rant though vice be rampant. But mere abstinence from overt vices does not make one a Christian for the Law makes no one

godly. The opposite is true, rather when the Law begins to produce its proper effects, the person who is feeling its power begins to fume and rage against God. When we preach the Law in a salutary sermon, many hearing will say to themselves, "If this man is right, I am lost."

Those resisting God may say: "This is not the way for an evangelical minister to preach." The Law must precede the preaching of the Gospel for if the Law does not precede the preaching of the Gospel, the Gospel will have no effect. When the Law is preached rightly in all its sternness, the people will at first exclaim, "How terrible is all this" but presently when the preacher passes over to the Gospel and then the people perceive the preacher's intention of exposing the awful nature of sin, they become cheered by the Gospel.

Walther also adds that a wrong division of the Word of God occurs when the various doctrines are not presented in their proper order. The Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law: sanctification first, then justification; faith first, then repentance; good works first and then grace. These are the four types of this perverse sequence that are possible. The apostles preached the correct order. It was the Law first, and then the Gospel: repentance first, then faith, justification, forgiveness, and consolation first, and then sanctification: it was grace first, and then good works out of a grateful heart. C. F. W. Walther suggests that in Romans we have a true pattern of correct sequence. First, the Law is preached threatening men with the wrath of God. Next the Gospel is preached announcing the comforting promises of God. This is then followed by instruction regarding the things we are to do after we have become new

men. Not until this entire pattern has been worked through should it be stated to the people: "Now you must show your gratitude toward God."

Walther holds that the Word of God is also not rightly divided when either the Law or the Gospel is preached to the wrong subject. That is: when the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins or the Gospel to those who live securely in their sins. The Law is not to be preached to the terrified sinner, rather consolation and grace, forgiveness of sins and righteousness, or life and salvation, must be preached to the broken-hearted. The Lord Himself followed this practice when he comforted the crushed woman who washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. He applied the same principle to Zaccheus, the woman caught in adultery, and even to the prodigal son in his parable of the same name. On the cross the Lord speedily granted absolution to the alarmed thief. Here, by the Lord's own example, we find demonstrated repeatedly the correct way to treat a poor sinner already terrified by the Law. The Apostles followed the identical practice. Likewise, Walther asserts the Word of God is not rightly divided if the Gospel is preached to such as live securely in their sin. It is useless to offer mercy to the godless. Christ himself confronted the self-righteous Pharisees and had not a drop of consolation to give them. Here, He fearless told them the truth: that is, Jesus Christ preached the Law in all its sternness to these secure sinners. Faithful preachers of the Word today, who face this same class of people, dare not preach anything other than the Law to them. We must follow the example, in this matter, of both the Lord and his apostles. When the secure sinner penitently begins to "labor and is heavy laden,"

then, and only then, is he a fit subject for the consoling "rest" of the Gospel.

Walther was concerned that appropriate measures be taken when terrified sinners were struck down by the Law. For the Law and Gospel are not properly distinguished when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and the Sacraments, but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace. In other words, they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace. When sinners were struck down and terrified by the Law, the apostles immediately applied the Gospel. No demands were made; penitent hearers were just to listen to his words and take comfort from them. This comfort was the promise of the forgiveness of sins, of life, and salvation. When a terrified sinner was struck down by the Law, the apostles merely applied the Gospel and baptized the new convert immediately. The Lord practiced the same thing with Paul. The Lord did not require him to experience all sorts of feelings but promptly proclaimed to him the word of Grace. The Lord, here, effectively patterns for us the leading of sinners, who have been crushed by the Law, to the assurance of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Walther urges preachers to preach the Law to the point where a terrified sinner completely puts off the garment of his own righteousness and declares himself a miserable, wicked man, whose heart is sinning continually. Walther holds this necessary to preach the Law rightly. The sects err here and incorrectly preach the Law. Their approach is wrong for they make vivid appeals to the imagination as they preach the Law in great sternness. In making their appeal to

the imagination their words fail to sink into the depth of the heart. Also the sects fail to preach the Gospel properly. The alarmed sinner is directed to long lists of efforts that he must make in order to be received into grace. They encourage the sinner to pray at length, struggle, and wrestle strenuously. The sects have misunderstood the Gospel and subsequently neither teach nor believe a real reconciliation of man with God. They regard God as very hard to deal with and hence one who must be sought with pain and tears. This amounts to a denial of Jesus Christ for He has long ago turned the heart of God to men by reconciling the entire world with Him.

As Walther views it, the Reformed theologians are one group that took offense at the Gospel. The doctrine that the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness in the sight of God, and eternal salvation, is obtained in no other way than by the believer putting his confidence in the written Word, in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper, and in absolution, is most offensive to Reformed theologians. This theology is rejected by them as too mechanical.

Walther was an advocate of the practice of absolution. The absolution pronounced by a poor sinful preacher is not his absolution but the absolution of Jesus Christ Himself. The preacher absolves a person by the command of Christ for "The Office of the Keys" is the peculiar power which Christ has given the church on earth. The preacher utilizes this power as the servant of the church. Removal of sins is not based on a mysterious power of the pastor but on the fact that Christ has taken away the sins of the world long ago and everybody is to share this fact with his fellowman. God has ordained the office of the pastor or preacher to the administration of the means of grace, the Word and



the sacraments. In an emergency it becomes evident that a layman has the authority to do what a prelate, or a superintendent does, and do it just as effectively. If a man accepts his forgiveness, he is to be absolved. To obtain this treasure of absolution, there must be at least two persons involved: one who bestows it and another who receives it.

Law and Gospel are grievously commingled by those who assert that assurance of forgiveness requires prayerful struggle. Feelings must always proceed from faith and never faith from feeling; as in struggling for faith and then believing on account of some new joyful sensation arising within. If I am worried about my lack of sensation or the feeling of grace for which I am earnestly longing, that is proof that I am a true Christian. This is true, for one who desires to believe is already a believer for as soon as I want to believe something, I am actually secretly believing it. We must rather believe and then wait until God grants the sweet sensation that our sins have been taken from us.

The sects all have this grievous error in common, that they do not rely solely on Christ and His Word but chiefly on something that takes place in themselves.

Walther held that the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous in the sight of God and saves him: or as if faith makes a person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living. The faith which the Holy Spirit creates justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold on Christ. The faith which the Holy

Ghost creates cannot but do works. Faith that fails to work is not real faith. Also the ineffectiveness of a faith that fails to work by love is that it is not real honest faith at all. Love's proper relationship to faith is that love grows out of faith. Faith is a fruitful tree that proves its vitality by bearing its fruit.

Genuine faith and an impure heart cannot dwell together. A person who claims to have firm faith which he will never abandon, but still has an impure heart must be told that he has no faith whatsoever for his heart is unchanged. One may regard all the doctrines that are preached in the Lutheran Church as true but, if his heart is still in its old condition and saturated with the love of sin, his whole faith is mere sham.

Faith, justifying faith, may not be represented as an inert mental act regarding certain matters as true which can co-exist with mortal sin. To hold this view is to treat faith as a work that man can produce in himself. This error is compounded when it is asserted that this faith can co-exist with mortal sin. It must be remembered that true faith is a treasure which only the Holy Spirit can bestow. True faith and a good conscience must be companions. A person who does not have a good conscience certainly is without faith. Sins of weakness do not extinguish faith, yet they must not be taken lightly. It is important to know precisely what is the justifying element in a person's faith. Christianity teaches that faith does not justify and save a person because it is such a good work, but on account of the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, which faith apprehends.

Walther held also that the Word of God is not rightly divided when there is a disposition to offer the comfort of the Gospel only to

those who have been made contrite by the Law, not from fear of punishment of God, but from love of God. The Law, since the fall, has one central function and that is to lead men to the knowledge of their sins. The Law has no power to renew man. The power to renew man is vested solely in the Gospel. An unrenewed or unconverted person cannot love God. Only faith produces or works love and a person cannot love God while he is without God and without faith.

To demand of a poor sinner that he must, from love of God, be alarmed on account of his sins and feel sorry for them is a perversion of Law and Gospel. Under such circumstances and until faith comes, the poor sinner will be able only to hate God. When the Law is rightly preached the sinner is crushed and a feeling of great need comes upon him. It is at this point the true preacher of the Gospel steps in. At this point, a genuine preacher of the Gospel will show such a person how easy salvation is. The sinner must come as he is, with evil heart of unbelief and hatred of God and His Law and all. When the sinner comes in this penitent condition there is good news. Jesus will receive him as he is. The Law does not nor cannot produce love. It can only produce the knowledge of sins. A person can possess the knowledge of sin without the love of God. When the Law is preached to a person with inward sin, that individual rears up against the preaching and does not become better but worse. Walther contends that man who is brought to desperation has taken a great step forward on the way to his salvation. This penitent man, made desperate and smarting under the Law's judgment, will receive the Gospel with joy.

Walther urges pastors when preaching to contrite sinners not to be stingy with the Gospel. The consolation of the Gospel must be

generously brought to even the greatest sinner. When anyone is terrified by the wrath of God [that is: terrified by the thought of his sin and alienation from God, and of his being under God's wrath and because of this falls into sorrow] he is fully prepared to receive the Gospel. Apply the Gospel to his contrite heart generously for no person can produce contrition in himself. Godly sorrow is not a sorrow man can produce in himself but one that God produces in man [2 Cor. 7:1]. Contrition is not a good work which we do, but something that God works in us. A person merged in the right kind of sorrow yearns to be rid of it. There is good news, then for the genuinely contrite person. This genuinely penitent person is in a fit condition to approach the throne of grace to receive forgiveness and consolation.

Walther held, too, that the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher presents contrition alongside of faith as a cause of the forgiveness of sin. While contrition has a proper and necessary place in God's redeeming plan, for whenever repentance is placed in opposition to faith, it signifies nothing else than contrition, it is not a cause of forgiveness of sins. That is, contrition is not necessary on account of the forgiveness of sin. Sin is solely an effect of the Law. To regard contrition as a cause of the forgiveness of sins is equivalent to turning the Law into a message of grace and the Gospel into Law. This, of course, is a perversion which overthrows the entire Christian religion. Contrition is not even a good work for it is not a thing that man can produce in himself. Genuine repentance is produced by God Himself only when the Law is preached in all sternness and man does not wilfully resist its influence. The purpose of

contrition is only to the end that he may be roused from security and ask, "What must I do to be saved?"

To Luther, repentance was the very heart of the Gospel. Repentance to both Luther and Walther meant not to do penance but simply that a sinner must be alarmed on account of his sins and desire the mercy of God. Therefore, he could go to Him with the assurance that He would receive him as he was, with all his sins and anguish and misery. If a man has a desire to come to Jesus, he has true contrition even if he does not feel it. A person crushed and broken without any comfort anywhere and looking about himself anxiously for consolation, such a one is truly contrite. He must be told not only that he may, but that he should, boldly come to Jesus and not imagine that he is coming too soon. One of the principal reasons why many at this point mingle Law and Gospel is that they fail to distinguish the daily repentance of Christians from the repentance which precedes faith. David had contrition together with faith and this is the sacrifice which pleases God. This contrition mixed with faith is not a mere effect of the Law produced by Law alone, for this contrition is at the same time an operation of the Gospel. Walther contends that it is by the Gospel that the love of God enters a person's heart, and when contrition in the believer proceeds from the love of God, it is indeed a truly sweet sorrow, acceptable to God.

When one makes an appeal to believe in a manner as if a person could make himself believe or at least help toward that end instead of preaching faith into a person's heart by laying the Gospel promises before him, the Word of God is not rightly divided. Man cannot produce faith in himself. If a person were able to produce faith in himself, then faith would become a work. For Luther and subsequently for

Walther, to be saved through faith means to acquiesce in God's plan of salvation by simply accepting it. Anyone who has come to understand that it is up to him to accept what is offered him and actually accepts it, has faith. Luther made this appeal in such a manner that the hearer gets the impression that he may freely receive what is being offered him and find a resting place in the lap of divine grace. A preacher must be able to preach a sermon on faith without ever using the term faith. This was Luther's approach. Walther urges this clarification that the demand of faith and the demand of the Law should be viewed as distinctly different. If faith were to be a Law-type demand, that is, an order, then faith would become a work. The demand of faith, however, is not an order but a blessed invitation, "Come, for all is now ready," Luke 14:17. This faith demand, then, takes the form not of requirement but of a sweet invitation. If it were otherwise Law and Gospel would be commingled and faith would become a work. Walther continued in this vein and asserted also that the Word of God is not rightly divided when faith is required as a condition of justification and salvation as if a person were righteous in the sight of God and saved, not only through faith but also on account of his faith, for the sake of his faith, and in view of his faith. He reiterated that justification by grace through faith is entirely God's work. Man does not contribute to his own salvation for even belief itself is not an act of man. Man is not saved by his own acts but solely by the doing and dying of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is Redeemer of the whole world. Any teaching that salvation is a co-operative enterprise in which God does something for man, and man then does something in response to insure his salvation, makes faith and salvation meritorious and nullifies the Gospel.

Romans 3:24: ". . . . being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ . . ." teaches that we are justified gratuitously without anything, even the least thing, being required of us. If this were not so our salvation could not be considered a gift. We honor Jesus as our faithful Savior by making His Gospel our refuge. The command to believe is not a condition of man's justification and salvation but an invitation to accept a free gift from God. Justification, then, is a gift and the preacher's urgent plea is simply an invitation to receive the Gospel or repent and believe.

The Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance. Walther observed that both of these terms Repentance and Gospel had two senses. Each had a wide and a narrow meaning.

Repentance in the wide sense signifies conversion viewed in its entirety; embracing knowledge of sin, contrition and faith. In Acts 2:38 'repent and believe' refers to conversion in its entirety, including faith. What he meant to say was this: If you acknowledge your sins and believe in the Gospel which I have just preached to you, then be baptised for the forgiveness of sins.

Repentance used in a narrower sense signifies the knowledge of sin and heartfelt sorrow and contrition. Repentance used in the narrow sense does not include faith: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel,' Acts 20:21. When faith is named separately in a text the term repentance cannot include knowledge of sin, contrition and faith, Matt. 21:32.

The Gospel has both a wide and a narrow meaning. Its wide meaning is used merely by way of synecdoche signifying anything that Jesus preached. This would include Jesus' poignant preaching of the

Law. This usage is demonstrated in His sermon on the Mount where he reproved wicked men.

The narrow meaning of the Gospel is its proper sense. The Gospel in its narrow sense means the preaching of salvation by grace through faith with no admixture of Law whatever. Another example is Eph. 6:15 which speaks of 'the Gospel of Peace' since the Law does not bring peace, but only unrest, that which is spoken of here is the Gospel in its narrow sense.

It is dangerous and harmful to the souls of men for a minister to preach in such a manner as to lead men to believe that he regards the Gospel in its narrow and proper sense as a preaching of the Law and the anger of God against sinners, calling them to repentance. In Romans 10:16 ". . . obeyed the Gospel" here does not make the Gospel an improved Law but a willing obedient response to God both in Law and His gracious will. When we accept what He gives we are said to obey Him. There are a number of identifying marks which distinguish the Gospel as used in the strict sense.

1. When the Gospel is contrasted with the Law, it is quite certain that the term Gospel does not refer to the Gospel in the wide but the narrow sense.
2. Whenever the Gospel is presented as the peculiar teaching of Christ, or as the doctrine that proclaims Christ, it cannot refer to the Law at the same time.
3. Whenever poor sinners are named as the subject to whom the Gospel is addressed, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18).
4. Whenever forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation by grace are named as effects of the Gospel, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13).
5. When faith is named as the correlate of the Gospel, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense (Mark 1:15; Mark 16:15-16).



Walther asserts the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices and engage in certain works of piety and virtuous practices. The reason being this, conversion is not the laying aside of certain vices and replacing them by certain works of piety. Rather, conversion is this, that a man is completely changed by becoming a new creature or being born anew. Genuine conversion produces a living faith in a person. This conversion can only be effected by the Gospel. The sinner must know that a change of his innermost self must take place, for what the Lord requires is a new mind, a new heart, and a new spirit: not quitting vice and doing good works.

All that a person undertakes to do while he is still in his carnal nature is sin. The proper order is to first become a different man by a change or conversion in the innermost self. Then, having put away his own particular sins, the new convert begins to exercise himself in good works. The important thing is not the works themselves but the love or source from which they proceed. Walther agrees with Luther here in regard to this regenerate person. Both Walther and his mentor Luther view everything he does as God's work alone. In other words, a Christian has a right mind in all that he does therefore his actions are God-pleasing. From a pure fountain nothing but good sweet water can flow. In a regenerate person, everything he does is God's good work. The gist of all this teaching is that Christ wants to make us godly from the root upward.

Dr. Walther affirms that when a description is given of faith, both as regards its strength, consciousness, and the productiveness of

it, that does not fit all believers at all times, then, the Word of God is not rightly divided. A problem here as Walther sees it is this: Some pastors, in their zeal, want to rouse their people and warn them against self-deception to the extent that they are tempted to go beyond the Word of God. In their zeal they imagine that in order to prevent hypocrites from regarding themselves as Christians, they cannot raise the demands they make upon those who are Christians enough. Such zeal is good, says Walther, but it shouldn't be the ultimate aim of the pastor. The pastor's ultimate aim must be to lead his hearers to the assurance that they have forgiveness of sins with God, that they have hope of the future blessed life and confidence to meet death cheerfully. Anyone who does not make these things his ultimate aim is not an evangelical minister. For the aforementioned reasons, the pastor must be careful not to say, "anyone who does this or that is not a Christian": unless he is quite sure of his ground. Paul, in Romans 7:18, describes the Christian as a dual being. While the true Christian always desires what is good, he frequently does not accomplish the good he desires. In spite of his failures, however, this person has not fallen from grace. For C. F. W. Walther, to will what is good is the main trait of the Christian. If a preacher describes a Christian as if he does not really will what is good unless he accomplishes it, the description is unbiblical. A minister has no right to denounce a person as unchristian because he is not doing all that he should as long as the person maintains that he does not will his imperfections (Gal. 5:17; Heb. 12:1). To enumerate marks of a true Christian which are not found in all Christians is to misrepresent a Christian and this will do infinite harm. The minister, therefore, must point out to Christians the proper remedy when they sin.

This remedy is; sinners should rise promptly from their unintentional fall. The pastor must be able to deal with sin while identifying real Christianity. It is of decisive importance that a pastor know whether the fallen sinner loves the Word of God and his Savior or whether he is hardened and leads a shameful life. One of the best guidelines available to the pastor is that laid down in the Scriptures. We must read the Gospels and note how the disciples conducted themselves before the Lord in all things.

Walther contended that the Word of God is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely. He states flatly that no pastor who is conversant with pure doctrine will make the claim that the universal corruption of mankind, that includes embracing dominant and wilful sins on the part of the believers, is a part of the believer's makeup. No one who is conversant with pure doctrine will make the unqualified assertion that a Christian can be a fornicator and an adulterer. Rather, when speaking of men sinning the qualifying statement may be "as we by nature" or "as long as a person is still in the state of natural depravity and unregenerate." Hearers need to know that mankind is divided into two great classes: believers, and unbelievers. The hearers must learn that they are either spiritually dead or spiritually alive that is, converted, or unconverted. They need to know that they are either under the wrath of God or in a state of grace. For Walther, to confound these two classes of men is an abominable mingling of Law and Gospel.

Sin will not dominate a Christian. It is absolutely impossible that a person who is in a state of grace should be ruled by sin. (1 Cor. 6:7-11). Repentance is essential and it consists of this, that he desires to commit these sins no more. Whoever voluntarily and intentionally commits these sins has, by that token, a proof that he is not a Christian but a reprobate who is moved, not by the Spirit of God, but by the hellish spirit. In 2 Peter 2:20-22, the Apostle speaks of persons who had been children of God in a state of divine grace but volunteered for sin. These have fallen away, for those who are not led by the Spirit of God, but by their flesh, are not the children of God, but servants of the devil. True believers are not under the spell of ruling sins and are not sinning purposely, for wilful sins are not a part of the believer's makeup.

Walther continued, when the preacher speaks of certain sins as if they are not of a damnable but a venial nature the Word of God is not rightly divided. We must not think of any sin so trifling as to be automatically remitted by God because God does not regard it as great evil. A distinction must, however, be made between a mortal and a venial sin. A person failing to make this distinction does not rightly divide Law and Gospel. Certain sins drive the Holy Ghost from the believer. These sins which expel the Holy Ghost and bring on spiritual death are called mortal sins. When the Holy Ghost is driven out, faith also is ejected for no one can come to or retain faith without the Holy Ghost. Sins of weakness or rashness which a Christian commits without forfeiting the indwelling of the Holy Spirit must also be brought under control and confessed and be forgiven too. We must not allow practicers of venial sin to feel undisturbed or treat a sin as 'trifling' or unimportant. Our God

is a Holy and righteous God and He can become a terrible fire to those who would rise up against Him. There is no sin venial in itself, but there are sins that will not hinder a person from still believing in Jesus Christ with all his heart. What makes a person a Christian is this believing knowledge that he is a miserable accursed sinner, who would be forever lost if Christ had not died for him. But Christ who was both truly God and truly man, born of a virgin, has redeemed him from being a lost and condemned creature. A Christian must regard himself as a lost and condemned sinner or all his talk about faith is vain and worthless. The believer is the very person who regards sin as a very serious matter, and receives this word of comfort (Rom. 8:1), ". . . There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Sin must be seen as it is, lawlessness and rebellion against God who treats anger and murder alike (Matt. 5:21-22). To be an evangelical or orthodox preacher means to Walther that sin must be magnified. Sin must be taken seriously. The minister must proclaim the judgment of God. He must pronounce a severe judgment on sin. The orthodox preacher regards no sin, venial or otherwise, lightly. The believer must be taught that he sins so much each day that except for Christ, God would have to cast him into hell. Any Christian will tell you that as soon as he had sinned he felt unrest. This unrest continued until he asked God for forgiveness. In every true Christian the conscience promptly rings an alarm. Christian experience itself confirms that in its nature no sin is venial. All sin must, then, be seen for what it is, damnable, and not to be regarded lightly. Venial sin, too, must be confessed and forgiven.

When a person's salvation is made to depend on his association with the visible orthodox church and when salvation is denied to every person who errs in any article of faith, Walther says, the Word of God is not rightly divided. The doctrine that says the visible institution which Christ has established on earth differing in no way from a religious state. This view is erroneous for the Word of God says clearly: "on this Rock I will build my church, and the power of death shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). This rock is Christ and no one is a member of the church except he who is built upon Jesus Christ. Being built upon Christ does not mean connecting oneself mechanically with the church but rather putting one's confidence in Christ. No one is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets who does not believingly cling to their witness (Eph. 2:19-22). For no one is a member of the church without a living faith. It must be remembered, however, that only God knows whether an individual is a true member of the church. To the eyes of God alone the church is visible, to the eyes of men the church is invisible.

Walther contended that this error of the Lutheran Church being the visible church outside of which there is no salvation is the primary falsehood of his time. Those who teach this error claim to be good Lutherans who oppose papists. The worst feature of this false teaching is this: it makes a person's salvation depend on this membership in, and communion with, the visible orthodox church which negates the doctrine of justification of grace through faith. Here faith becomes a work that man can do.

In reality, the true church is not limited to any external organization, but rather, extends throughout the world. This means that

members of the true church are found in all sects. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and is a member of His spiritual body is a member of the Church. This true church is never divided. It is separated by space and time but is ever one.

Whenever the Word of God is proclaimed and confessed or even recited during the service, the Lord is gathering a people for Himself. The church is gathered to the Lord through the power of His Word. Wherever the Lord is preached or confessed, that Word is always bearing fruit or souls to God.

The false doctrine that the Lutheran Church is the only true church involves a fatal confounding of the Law and the Gospel. Setting up a demand of some kind as necessary to salvation in addition to faith means commingling Law and Gospel. One should want to belong to the Lutheran Church for the sole reason that he wants to side with the truth. Should he find he belongs to a church that harbors errors with which he does not wish to be contaminated, he may quit that church and by so doing he confesses the pure unadulterated truth. In the sense that the Lutheran Church has the pure and unadulterated truth, it is the true visible church but only in that one sense.

When men are taught that the sacraments produce salutary effects ex opere operato, that is by the mere outward performance of a sacramental act, the Word of God is not rightly divided. Any teaching that suggests that despite their unbelief, and providing they are not living in mortal sin, they will derive some benefit by merely submitting to a sacramental act, contradicts the Word of God and is a false doctrine. This error contradicts the Gospel which teaches that a person is justified before God and saved by grace alone. If I am justified, says

Walther, or if I obtain grace, by my act of submitting to baptism or by my act of going to communion, I am justified by works (Rom. 3:28). When partaken in unbelief, Baptism and Holy Communion place any person under condemnation for not approaching it with faith in their hearts. Grace does not operate in a chemical or mechanical manner. Grace operates only by the Word, by virtue of God's saying continually "your sins are forgiven you." Therefore, it is of paramount importance that one believe, that one regard, not the water in Baptism, but the promise which Christ has attached to the water. The same thing applies to the Holy Supper. The grace of God comes or operates by the Word. To this Word of God the believer must cling by faith. If belief is absent he is committing a sin by doing something that does not proceed from faith for the Word of God does not benefit a person who does not believe. If the act of being baptised and partaking of Holy Communion brings grace to a person, the Gospel has been turned into a Law because salvation rests on a person's work. This is not the Gospel for the Gospel says simply. "Believe, and you will be saved." It is the Law that issues the order "Do this and you will live." Here the Law is turned into a Gospel, because salvation is promised a person as a reward for his works. If the Word that is preached will not benefit a person unless he believes it, neither will being baptized and taking communion benefit without faith. That which urges believers to receive the sacraments is the promise of Grace which God has attached to these outward or visible signs. Through faith the Lutheran Church maintains that Baptism is "the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit." Those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. The Lutherans maintain the truth of the Lord's Word which says, "This is my body which is given for you" and "this is



my blood, which is shed for you." The Lutheran Church regards the Holy Sacraments as the most sacred, gracious, and precious treasure on earth. However, at no time has the Lutheran Church asserted that men are saved by the external use of the sacraments. The mere mechanical action of being baptized, if it is not accompanied by faith, will earn for man nothing but perdition. The case is different, however, for the believer. In the sacrament God seals to believers the promise of Grace. The Scriptures do not teach that mere outward acts save anyone. The bare symbol placed before men's eyes, does not produce the salutary effect, but indicates what the Word proclaims. The sacraments do produce effects in the believer's heart. The symbols indicate what the Word proclaims in this manner. The believer is baptized with water which signifies that the baptism effects cleansing from sins, sanctification, regeneration and renewal. What he is being told by means of preaching, he beholds in the external elements of baptism. The Word and the sacrament produce the same effect in the heart.

Walther holds that the Word of God is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted. He holds this is also true when a person's inability to believe is mistaken for his not being permitted to believe. The Pietists of the first half of the eighteenth century were guilty of a serious confusion of the Law and the Gospel by advocating a significant error in regard to obtaining the way of salvation. They declared that all men were divided into three classes:

1. Those still unconverted.
2. Those who had been awakened but not converted.
3. Those who had been converted.

However, according to the Scriptures there are only two classes of people: those who are converted and those who are not. The Pietists assert that only those who have an experience of contrition like David's, that is, who spend days weeping and bowed down with grief, have had a genuine conversion experience. Those without this contrition experience are not assured of the state of grace and of salvation. Such a person is still unconverted and only awakened. This is an erroneous assumption. Peter never taught it. On Pentecost a person was able to become a true Christian without experiencing the great anguish of David. Peter simply told the penitent: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and all will be well with you."

Walther contends that according to the Scripture it is not difficult to be converted, but to remain in a converted state is difficult. The repentance of Matt. 7:13 is not the narrow gate through which a person manages himself, but, rather, repentance is a condition that God produces in a person. We must apply the Word of God to ourselves; at this point we have the first part of penitence. After this an application of the unqualified Gospel will produce faith in us. The receiving of the Gospel immediately brings an inward conflict. The error of the false teachers in regard to this matter is that they place this conflict before conversion. Walther contends that an unconverted person is not qualified for such a conflict for this conflict results from the cross of the narrow way. Walther locates the error of the Pietists here in that they mistook the inability to believe for not being permitted to believe. An unrighteous person who considers himself righteous cannot believe. Also, if an individual is ambitious of honor, he cannot come to faith as a person cannot come to faith who simply will not quit a

certain sin. Whoever tells a person that he may not believe is either wicked or, in this respect, still blind. The entire world has been reconciled by Christ's sacrifice and God's wrath has been removed. Christ died for us and it is the same as if all men had suffered death for their sins. It is the same as if all had atoned for their sins by their death. Now that the entire world has been redeemed and reconciled to God, is it not a horrible teaching to tell any person that he may not believe that he has been reconciled and redeemed and has forgiveness of sins? Such an approach is contrary to the Gospel. Everybody is to know that God has had the glad tidings brought to him in order that he may believe and take comfort in it. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, God has absolved the entire world of sinners from their sins.

Finally, this teaching is contrary to the doctrine of absolution. Jesus, after redeeming the entire world, has given His followers power to forgive everyone's sins. Absolution like Holy Communion is appropriated through faith. Mistaking inability to believe for not being permitted to believe is contrary to the practice of the apostles.

Walther also states that when an attempt is made by means of the demands or the threats or the promises of the Law to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly: or on the other hand, when an endeavor is made by means of the commands of the Law, rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good, the Word of God is not rightly divided. In the first part of this two part thesis its author states the Word is not rightly divided because it was never the purpose of the Law to make men godly but to show them their sinful condition. The right purpose

for the preaching of the Law is to alarm secure sinners and to bring them to contrition. The Law is for the unregenerate. The change of heart is produced not by the Law but by the Gospel, by the message of the forgiveness of sins. It was never the purpose of the Law, before or after the fall, to make men godly. The confounding of the Law and Gospel often occurs when ministers become aware that all their Gospel preaching is useless because gross sins of the flesh still prevail among their hearers. The preacher may come to the conclusion that he has preached too much Gospel to his people and something else is needed. It is a mistake to stop and preach Law here for this will only momentarily alter behavior but it cannot change hearts. Only the Gospel changes hearts. Even the most corrupt congregation can be changed by the preaching of the Gospel in all of its sweetness. The reason why congregations are corrupt is invariably this: the pastors have not sufficiently preached the Gospel to their people. The Law kills but the spirit, that is the Gospel, makes alive. The moment an unbelieving person believes and is melted and dissolved in the fire of heavenly love and grace a change takes place. The moment he believes in this love, he cannot but love God and motivated by gratitude for his salvation he will do anything from love of God and for His glory. The pastor, therefore, must not think that his role is to be the policeman of his flock but rather he must see himself as the preacher of the Gospel which changes and melts men's hearts.

For Walther the Word of God is not rightly divided when the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost is described in a manner as if it could not be forgiven because of its magnitude. The Holy Spirit brings faith to man from God and unless we receive from Him we shall never have

it. To declare a work of the Holy Ghost a work of the devil, when one is convinced that it is a work of the Holy Ghost, is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Whoever spurns the office of the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven of his sins for in this act he speaks against the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whoever rejects the Holy Spirit is beyond help. This includes God's help. It is characteristic of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that the person who has committed it cannot be restored to repentance. When this condition reaches a certain point, God ceases to operate on this individual. The impossibility for salvation resides here: the sinner cannot be induced to repent for he projects himself to this situation of irretrievable impenitence.

The pastor needs to be reserved in passing judgment in this matter. For man can say of no person before his death that he is guilty of this sin against the Holy Spirit for he may be penitent in his heart and privately lay hold on the promise of God. In general, when preaching on this subject the objective of the minister, then, must be this: to convince his hearers that they have not committed this sin. This is proper, for to a person who has committed this sin, preaching is of no benefit. Hence, only a fit subject for this Word would be listening anyway. The sin is not unpardonable because of its magnitude but because the sinner rejects the remedy for his predicament. Christians in distress still have faith and the Spirit of God is working in them. If a person has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, he would feel no remorse or distress. Instead of being remorseful such a person would constantly delight in continuing to blaspheme the Gospel. For Walther the entire problem centers in this: the individual who is guilty of

this sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is condemned primarily because of his unbelief.

Finally, Walther contended when the person teaching the Word of God does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching, the Word of God is not rightly divided. There is a proper order and predominance in the teaching of God's Word. The Law must be preached first as a preparation for the Gospel. A true preacher will adopt the ultimate aim of the preaching of the Law. This aim is that the Law is preached as the necessary preparation for the preaching of the Gospel. The preaching of the Law whose end is to alarm the sinner has this purpose: to prompt men to accept God's gracious message and not to reject it. The Gospel must be preached. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). This is the Gospel message of Joy. Jesus also adds: "he who does not believe will be condemned." This is also a sweet disclosure for it asserts unbelief as the only reason for damnation. When a person refuses to believe the words of Jesus, his unbelief sends him to perdition. The preaching of the Gospel, then, must predominate over the preaching of the Law. When this happens the congregation will come alive for the pastor's messages are filled with joy, for he is filled with joy. If the people are not joyful but sleepy or listless, then it is certain the Law and the Gospel have been mingled.

Walther contends here, then, that the finest form of confounding Law and Gospel occurs when the Gospel is preached along with the Law, but is not the predominating element in the sermon. Proclaiming Christ to the people must include telling men how to attain faith. The evangelical truth has not been proclaimed fully until men have been told how to attain that saving faith. If a preacher does not preach faith and tell

them how to attain faith, his people will be spiritually starved to death. The Gospel must be allowed to predominate in your preaching to the congregation for the hearers must be fed the bread of life. It must be remembered that the Law has no nourishment to feed the people. Only the Gospel is the bread of life. The Law crushes but the Gospel always heals. The Law, then has its proper function: to prepare men for the Gospel, but it must never be confounded with the Gospel.

### Justification by Grace through Faith

Like Luther before him, Walther sees justification by grace through faith as entirely God's work from the beginning to the end. Man does not contribute to his own salvation. Even faith itself is not an act of man but a work of the Holy Spirit for man is not saved by his own act or acts but that of God in Jesus Christ. Man is redeemed solely by the doing and dying of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the Redeemer of the whole world. We are taught in Romans 3:24 ". . . being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ . . ." that sinners are justified gratuitously without anything, even the least thing, being required of us. If this were not true, man's salvation could not be considered a gift. The sinner honors Jesus as his faithful Savior by making Christ's Gospel his refuge. Justification is a free gift. The command to believe is not a condition of man's justification and salvation but an invitation to accept a free gift from God. The preacher's urgent plea is simply an invitation to poor, terrified, penitent sinners, crushed, and struck down by the Law, to receive the Gospel. At this moment the faith which the Holy Spirit creates justifies because it clings to the gracious promise of Christ, and because it

lays hold on Christ the Lord of Life. This is justification by grace through faith alone.

### The Doctrine of the Law and the Gospel

For C. F. W. Walther, there are two main teachings or doctrines in Holy Scripture. The doctrinal content of the entire Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, is made up of these two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other. The two doctrines are the doctrines of the Law and the Gospel.

Rightly distinguishing between these two doctrines, the Law and the Gospel, is the most difficult and the highest art of Christians in general, and of theology in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the School of Experience.

The true knowledge of the distinction between Law and Gospel is not only a glorious light affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scripture, but without this knowledge Scripture is, and remains, a sealed book. Before this distinction is learned, the Scripture seems on the one hand to bless the reader and on the other hand to condemn him. A proper understanding reveals two distinct doctrines in both the Old Testament and the New. The moment we learn to know the distinction between the Law and the Gospel it is as if the sun were rising upon the Scriptures. Then we can see all the content of the Scripture in the most beautiful harmony.

Once we gain the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel, we understand the purpose of the Law better. The Law is holy and good because it comes from God. Walther asserts the Law is given



for a specific set of purposes and hence by nature has limitations ordained by God.

The Law of God has been with man since the beginning. The Rule of God was written in the heart of man at his creation. That Law written in the heart of man is called conscience. After man's fall into sin the conscience became darkened and man subsequently fell into gross idolatry and immorality. God, therefore, through Moses on Mount Sinai, gave man Law anew written on two tables of stone.

This Law of God was and is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteous and immutable will of God to man and brightens the dulled script of law on man's heart. The Law shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thought, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God. This law then threatens the transgressors of the Law with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. Walther holds, along with Luther, "Everything that rebukes sin is and belongs to the Law, the proper function of which is to condemn sin and lead to the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:30; 7:7).

The Law makes only demands on man but man cannot meet the demands of the Law. The Law demands man's whole heart: perfect purity and holiness in thought, word and deed.

Proverbs 3:26

" . . . My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

Matthew 22:37-40

" . . . Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these hang all the law and the prophets."

Man cannot meet the demands of the Law but the Law is of God and is instituted for God's purpose. The law has a threefold purpose.

1) The Law puts a check on wicked men (It keeps the ungodly man from wicked deeds.). 2) The Law acts as a mirror to show man how he looks in the sight of God (This convinces man of his sinfulness and his need of a savior for he sees himself as lost, condemned and totally unable to save himself.). 3) The Law, finally, is like a rule that shows man how God wants him to live in order to be pleasing to Him. In short, Walther sees the Law as that doctrine in the Scriptures that teaches us how we are to be, and what we are to do, and not to do. The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God. The Law is to be preached to all men, but especially to impenitent sinners, for the law and its threats will terrify the hearts of the unrepentant and bring them to a knowledge of their sin and to repentance (This should not be done, however, in such a way that they become despondent and fall into despair.). Rather, since ". . . the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24), hence, the law points and leads not away from but toward the Christ who is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4). The proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord, Christ, will then once more comfort and strengthen them with the assurance that if they believe the Gospel, God forgives them all their sins freely through Christ, accepts them for His sake as His children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them.

The Law cannot save man but it can and does convince him of his ungodliness and hence puts him on the way to salvation. The Law has not been abolished but rather it plays the significant and necessary role of bringing sinful man to repentance by confronting him with the knowledge

of sin. The Law terrifies, crushes, and strikes down sinners, and in this penitent condition the gracious invitation of the free gift of God is given and received with great joy for it can now truly be seen as good news.

For Walther the Gospel is a message of joy. Christ shows us what His Gospel is: "I have been godly in your place." The Gospel does not require good works of the sinner to make him godly. The Gospel requires nothing but faith. This faith is created in man by the Holy Spirit. This faith justifies freely; the faith which the Holy Spirit creates justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold on Christ. Justifying or saving faith must not be construed as a work which man can produce in himself. Faith, justifying faith, may not be represented as an inert mental act regarding certain matters as true which can co-exist with mortal sin. Faith is not a mental exercise or a work that man can produce in himself nor can saving faith or faith that justifies co-exist with mortal sin. Faith alone saves or justifies for by faith only can man receive, cling to, or lay hold on the forgiveness of his sins. This faith keeps looking to the promise and believing with full assurance that God forgives because Christ did not die in vain. Only this faith conquers the terror of sin and death. The Gospel proclaims that this is true. The glad tidings declares that all men are under sin and are worthy of eternal wrath and death but by faith for Christ's sake, forgiveness of sins and justification are offered to and received by the penitent sinner gratuitously.

It is clear, then, that faith grasps the promise of God. Faith lays claim to God's mercy. This grasping faith receives the promised reconciliation and the believer is accounted righteous and a child of

God, not on account of his own purity but by mercy on account of Christ. Faith alone justifies because man receives the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit by faith alone. Thus the Scripture testifies that we are accounted righteous by faith. By freely accepting the forgiveness of sins, faith sets against God's wrath not any merit of the penitent sinner but the merits of Christ, our mediator and propitiator. This faith that clings to the mercy of God regenerates the believer, frees him from death, brings forth a new life in his heart, is a work of the Holy Spirit, and makes all things new.

#### When and How the Gospel is to be Applied

As was stated earlier, when any person is in terror on account of his sins, he is a proper subject for the application of the Gospel. A crushed sinner, such as the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, should immediately receive the consoling message of God's grace and the forgiveness of sins. The glad tidings of righteousness, life, and salvation must be preached to the brokenhearted -- who are already in terror because of their sins. When sinners were struck down and terrified by the Law, both Jesus and His apostles immediately applied the Gospel. This is our example and it should be faithfully followed. We must remember that the man who has been made desperate, smarting under the Law's judgment, will receive the Gospel with joy. At this point the consolation of the Gospel must be generously brought to even the greatest sinner. When anyone is terrified on account of his sin, the wrath of God and hell, he is fully prepared to receive the Gospel. The bearer of the glad tidings should apply the Gospel to this prepared heart generously.

Rhetorical Paradigm I

## Law Ascertaining Questions

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce a sense of thirst?
  - a. Does the thirst remain?
  - b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?
2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?
  - a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?
  - b. Does it make demands on the hearer?
3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?
4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?
5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?
6. To what group is this sermon addressed? to secure sinners? to penitent sinners?

Rhetorical Paradigm II

## Gospel Ascertaining Questions

1. Is this a message of joy?
2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"
3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?
4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?
5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?
6. Does this sermon produce faith?
7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?
8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?
9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?
11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?
12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?
13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?
14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?
15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?
16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift evident?
17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

## CHAPTER V

### DR. CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL

Dr. Clovis Gillham Chappell was born on a large farm in Flatwoods, Tennessee, January 8, 1877. Chappell was the son of devout Methodist parents: William B. Chappell and his wife Mary. His educational preparation after attending Webb Preparatory School at Bell Buckle, Tennessee, included attending Duke University [old Trinity College], 1902-03: and Harvard University, 1904-05. He was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1908, and received the Doctor of Divinity degrees from Centenary College of Louisiana, and Duke University in 1920. April 15, 1908, he was married to Cecil Hart. Two sons were born to this union, Clovis Gillham and Bob Hart.<sup>1</sup> Clovis Chappell served some of the most distinguished Methodist churches in the United States including Highland Park, Dallas, Texas; Mount Vernon Place Church, Washington, D. C.; First Methodist Church, Memphis, Tennessee; First Methodist Church, Houston, Texas; First Methodist Church, Birmingham; St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Oklahoma City; Gallo-way Memorial Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi; First Methodist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, from which he retired in 1949.

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<sup>1</sup>Wallace Chappell, Clovis Chappell: Preacher of the Word (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1978), p. 8.

Chappell continued to write and preach for twenty years after his retirement. He died August 18, 1972.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Roy H. Short, Episcopal leader of Jacksonville, Florida, Nashville, Tennessee, and Louisville, Kentucky, wrote:

Dr. Clovis Chappell was everywhere acknowledged as one of the outstanding American preachers of his day. For forty years he filled some of the strongest pulpits. . . . The call for his services was so universal, though, that he was in constant demand on a nationwide platform. A steady flow of books, which sold by the thousands, came from his ready pen . . . .<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, radio preacher, author, long time New York pastor and Lyman Beecher Lecturer on preaching at Yale University, once stated over his nationwide broadcast that he ". . . considered Clovis G. Chappell the outstanding biblical preacher in America."<sup>4</sup> Andrew W. Blackwood, revered professor of Homiletics at Princeton University commented: "Now that Clovis Chappell has retired from the pastorate, he should teach young ministers in seminary for the next fifty years."<sup>5</sup> Chappell had a certain appeal to the masses. Wherever he pastored large crowds collected. Dr. Wallace Chappell, in his book recounting incidents in the life and ministry of Clovis Chappell, stated: "While others preached to what he called 'sacred seas of empty seats' or to moderately filled sanctuaries, [Chappell] witnessed to overflowing congregations."<sup>6</sup> He continued: "Although he never competed with anyone except the forces of darkness, no other minister in Washington drew the multitudes." [like Chappell did]<sup>7</sup> Later he noted when Chappell ". . . was

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. i.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



pastor of the First Methodist Church in Memphis, it was probably the best attended Methodist Church in the United States."<sup>8</sup>

During his six year ministry there, Chappell took in a total of 3,135 members.<sup>9</sup> Chappell's wife asserted that attending one of Dr. Clovis Chappell's Sunday night preaching services in Memphis was like attending a citywide campaign.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Chappell's appeal was his natural, matter of factness laced with folksy humor.

Dr. John Robert Parks wrote:

Clovis Chappell was considered unique in the pulpit where he carried his personality and thorough preparation. He spoke simply to the issues and needs of his people. Although no sensationalist he used humor and personal stories and illustrations to a maximum effect. His preaching style was consistent with his personality and people would remark years later how he was the "same old Dr. Chappell." His preaching was shared in seminaries, pastors, schools, retreats, and revivals and across denominational lines. Chappell could relate to all people in a folksy way that revealed the nostalgia and humor of southern rural America. His sermons were Biblical yet practical. He touched the contemporary without neglecting the doctrinal. . . . His style was simple and personal, yet this man believed in preparation. His written sermons were easily copied and preached.<sup>11</sup>

Chappell was a widely read author in the Methodist Church. Speaking to a group of Chappell's admirers a former vice president of Abingdon Press [the publishing house of the United Methodist Church ] said that by 1962 Dr. Clovis Gillham Chappell had in excess of eight and one-half million [8½ million] sermons in print.<sup>12</sup> He continued to preach, write and print for an additional decade thereafter.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Parks, John Robert, "Reflections on the Preaching of Clovis G. Chappell in the Mid-South," D. Min. Project at Vanderbilt University School of Divinity, April 13, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup>Chappell, p. 73.      <sup>11</sup>Parks, p. 2.      <sup>12</sup>Chappell, p. 59.

Young Methodist circuit riders and seminarians allegedly clamored to get the latest volume. Legendary tales grew up around Chappell's popularity among young preachers. A humorous incident occurred at one of the seminaries where Chappell had lectured and distributed his sermon books.

A smaller church had a new apprentice preacher to come out each Sunday. After three of them had preached on the theme of "Demas Has Deserted Me" [one of Chappell's sermons] . . . the fourth guest seminarian preacher was approached by a layman of this particular parish. ". . . preach on anything in the Bible that you please, but leave Demas alone. We have had him for three straight weeks."<sup>13</sup>

A well-known bishop preceded Clovis Chappell in an annual conference session [a required convocation of Methodist preachers and leading laymen to conduct the annual business of a geographic area]. The bishop preached first and in his introduction noted the wide use of Chappell's book of sermons and began in this vein: "Clovis Chappell, Clovis Chappell, Clovis Chappell . . . so often that is the man I hear quoted more than any other. I'll have you know . . . that this sermon I am preaching today is not Clovis' sermon."<sup>14</sup>

When Dr. Chappell's time to speak came, he opened his discourse with this remark: "Bishop, your choice of words was what Methodists used to call a work of supererogation -- five minutes after you had gotten started, these ministers knew that that was definitely not my sermon."<sup>15</sup>

While Clovis Chappell enjoyed a considerable hearing in his own country and among his own colleagues that was not the limits of his influence. In the introduction of Questions that Jesus Asked, British

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 61

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

minister, the Rev. R. D. Dauton-Fear of Gravesand, England, wrote the following after the bombings of England:

In underground tube stations the clergy conducted short services. There was one writer whom they had never seen but whose words were heard; and that man was Clovis G. Chappell. From the United States of America he spoke sometimes through the mouths of others who read his sermons aloud.<sup>16</sup>

He continued:

Some of our American cousins have sent us in Britain parcels of food. These have been most warmly appreciated, but Clovis Chappell has sent us the very bread of life received from his Master. We want to thank God and him for very great blessings received.<sup>17</sup>

In Clovis Chappell: Preacher of the Word, the author stated of Chappell that he wrote usually along two lines: Biblical themes or Biblical characters. He listed four volumes that were illustrative of Chappell's approach to sermonizing: Meet These Men (a book of sermons on Biblical characters), Values that Last (a book of sermons that deal with the pivotal truths, the crucial certainties of the gospel as he saw them), Ten Rules for Living (a series on the Ten Commandments), and Sermons From Revelation (a volume that episcopal Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes called an apocalypse).<sup>18</sup> Sermons on Biblical characters were perhaps his single greatest forte. Dr. Chappell wrote in his Chandler Lecture series at the Divinity School of Emory University:

For instance, a series on certain types of Biblical characters may be both vital and gripping. The Bible holds the mirror up to nature as no other book ever written. Here are living men. If you prick them, they will bleed. They are as vivid as your next door neighbor, and sometimes far more interesting. Given a chance, they will walk into your pulpit and live and laugh and sing and sob with you. They will also preach for you, a kind of preaching that will be fresh and interesting because it comes out of life. Then too such preaching will always be up to date because the heart of humanity is the same through the ages- "ever pulsating to the same great needs, the same

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

great loves and longings." Preaching on Bible characters, therefore, is at once gripping and helpful.<sup>19</sup>

In Concordia Theological Monthly, Dr. Richard Caemmerer, a Lutheran analyst, made this observation of one of his volumes using the above described method.

The texts are normally short and usually quite appropriate. Dr. Chappell tries to work closely with the Scriptural background of his subject, but allows himself to wander broadly through the associations of his theme. The descriptions concern traits of character and fundamental attitudes.<sup>20</sup>

Then the Concordia writer adds this interesting line of conclusion: "The Atonement is frequently involved only by inference."<sup>21</sup> This writer would like to reintroduce this observation in the conclusion of the evaluations of Clovis Chappell's sermonic discourse.

There is little doubt that Dr. Clovis Gillham Chappell was one of Methodism's foremost pulpiteers for over four decades. He was read almost to veneration by many preachers, pastors and seminarians across the United States and other English-speaking countries.

As has been evidence then, Chappell's sermons and books of more than thirty volumes have been read and drawn from over the years by student preachers, and veteran pastors alike. Chappell has been a preacher and writer who has influenced preachers and their preaching, in and out of his denomination, for more than half a century. For many beginning preachers of the word, Clovis Chappell was a model for preaching. Was Clovis Chappell, however, an orthodox preacher of the word as

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<sup>19</sup>Clovis G. Chappell, Anointed to Preach (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1951), pp. 73-74.

<sup>20</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "A Book Review of Clovis Chappell's If I Were Young," Concordia Theological Monthly 18 (January-June, 1947):79.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

described by C. F. W. Walther? That is, was he a correct model for preaching in that he properly distinguished between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel in his own preaching? Did people who were to learn from Chappell receive their education from the feet of one who properly distinguished between the Law and the Gospel?

### Some Helpful Explanations

In the pages that follow this researcher intends to apply evaluative criteria derived from the Walther corpus to the printed sermons of Clovis G. Chappell to determine if he was an orthodox, or correct, preacher of the Word. In the words of C. F. W. Walther, we want to discover an answer to the question: In these sermons analyzed, does Clovis Chappell properly distinguish between Law and Gospel? Herein was Clovis Gillham Chappell an orthodox or correct preacher of the Word?

In the evaluations ~~that~~ follow the sermons-in-outline, and later in the summary and conclusion, there are terms used that aid keener focus and sharper analysis. It is the author's desire to make them more manageable through explanation.

In these evaluations the term "explicit Gospel" means the setting forth in some obviously intentional fashion the doctrine of justification by grace through faith as articulated by C. F. W. Walther in his The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel. "Implicit Gospel", for the purposes of this study, may be defined as any suggestion that God is a gracious God, or a God of love, and "in some way" God has wrought mankind's redemption in Christ Jesus. An implicit Gospel does not cry out overtly, "I have been godly in your place." It rather, through inference and allusion, makes Gospel-sounding

suggestions. In other words, for the purpose of this study, an implicit Gospel is in reality no Gospel at all. C. F. W. Walther's theology suggests that the Word of God [Faith] must be preached [taught or spoken] into men's hearts.<sup>22</sup>

This writer cautions the reader that under Chappell's gifts and influence the orthodox or evangelical preacher must avoid the seduction of reading his own Gospel in between the lines of Chappell's winsome discourses.

There are so many aspects of preaching and theological thought that could come into a study such as this that the project could become interminable. The focus of this study, in order to be kept in the framework of a doctoral dissertation with validity and objectivity, is singularly centered in the following question. Does this set of sermons designated by the researcher as Group I and Group II, by Dr. Clovis G. Chappell, properly distinguish between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel as articulated in C. F. W. Walther's work The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel?

A word to the reader here is helpful. The Rhetorical Paradigms were constructed to measure sermons for the benefit of the analyst applying them. They are purposely designed to encourage spontaneity and cursory response. Lengthy answers are discouraged. A laborious tool, here, would be self-defeating. This rhetorical tool, then, is designed to gather a quick thumb-nail summary of what the sermon is doing or failing to do. Short explicit sentences that nail the subject down are intentionally encouraged.

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<sup>22</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), pp. 15-16.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROCEDURE

In this evaluative section we will proceed as follows: First, representative discourses from the published books of sermons by Dr. Clovis Chappell, have been outlined into eight schematics. These sermon schematics are placed in the dissertation corpus proper. The author of this dissertation needed a sampling of representative discourses by Dr. Chappell for analysis. How to determine which set of compilations to draw from was expedited by an astute evaluation by Dr. Wallace Chappell, long time pastor of historic McKendry Church of Nashville, Tennessee, and visiting lecturer in evangelism and preaching at Oral Roberts University School of Divinity. Dr. Chappell's biography of his uncle, Clovis Chappell, plus a series of earnest in-person dialogues on this subject, was most helpful in choosing exemplary sermons for analysis. In his biographical sketch, Dr. Wallace Chappell identified six books which he considered representative of his mentor's preaching. In content and approach to the sermonic endeavor, Wallace Chappell listed four volumes of Clovis Chappell's books of sermons as representative of his preaching. These are Meet These Men, Values That Last, Ten Rules for Living, and Sermons from Revelation. These four volumes comprise fifty-seven (57) sermons in manuscript form. From these fifty-seven sermons this writer selected four representative sermons for a detailed analysis and evaluation.

In order to maintain objectivity and scientifically valid conclusions, a control group was constructed. Four additional volumes, Sermons on Biblical Characters (1923), Faces About the Cross (1942), The Sermon on the Mount (1930), and Chappell's Special Day Sermons (1950) were selected from the more than 500 available sermons of over thirty volumes. This control group was drawn from four volumes which included sixty-two sermons. All 119 sermons were carefully perused. A total of eight sermons was selected for the purposes of this study. Four of the sermons were set forth from the group acknowledged as representative of Chappell's work and four were selected from the additional volumes to form a control group to substantiate or validate any conclusions drawn.

In his lecture series on Preaching at Chandler School of Theology at Emory University, Clovis Chappell said:

If we do not win and hold attention, we are wasting our own time as well as the time of our congregation. This is the case regardless of how solid and true our sermon may be. . . . if nobody is listening, we might as well be making mud pies. . . . Not only are we wasting our time and the time of our congregation, but we are doing worse than wasting it. We are doing our congregation positive harm. We are training them in the art of inattention. . . . It is therefore the first business of the minister to win and hold attention. . . . First if the preacher is to be interesting, he must be interested.<sup>1</sup>

Again and again, during his lecture series, Chappell drove home the message of "be interesting". Put your best foot forward by arresting, winning, gripping, and holding your congregation's attention. He personally employed this principle well. It was in the spirit of this understanding of Chappell's method that this author proceeded in the

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<sup>1</sup>Clovis G. Chappell, Anointed to Preach (Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1951), p. 51.



sermon selection process. Chappell, according to his biographer, polished, pruned, and reworked every sermon in almost painful detail even for the smallest audience.<sup>2</sup> Then, it would be necessarily true that when publishing his volumes for the masses, this method would be no less in evidence. It may be logically inferred, then, that each volume would contain the best of Chappell's issue to date. It also may be properly assumed that Chappell's lifelong penchant for imaginatively placing one's best foot forward and arresting the attention of the hearer would dictate that the first offering in each volume would be an exemplary Chappell work.

In endeavoring to get such a representative of Chappell's work over the decades of his active pastoring, this method was employed. An early volume from each of four successive decades was selected so that representative sermons from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s could be assessed. Also, an offering from a post-retirement volume (1950) was included in the control group. The intention here is that representative offerings of Clovis Chappell's preaching from four decades are available for perusal for making and confirming judgments on the preaching of this twentieth century Methodist preacher.

The Rhetorical Paradigms digested and extracted from the Walther corpus serve as the instruments by which Law and Gospel judgments are assessed against Chappell's work. While many questions may be legitimately raised against any preacher's work only one basic inquiry is germane to this thesis. As C. F. W. Walther asked again and again:

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<sup>2</sup>Wallace Chappell, Clovis Chappell: Preacher of the Word (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), pp. 18-19.

"Does this sermon properly distinguish between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel?"

The following method was used to expedite the analytical process. The sermons of Chappell to be evaluated were submitted to a full content outline or schematic. The outline was intended to be faithful to the gist of Chappell's work. By necessity, there was some sentence paraphrasing and reconstructing. Where helpful, redundancies and unhelpful illustrations were dropped. The author's intent was to reproduce the gist of Chappell's discourse as faithfully as possible. The analytical process was aided by the systematic breakdown of a logical schematic. In order to assess certain sections or lines within a section of a given sermon the notations for location such as [IA3] were added at the end of the section or line. In some cases where the notation initiates the sentence the brackets are dropped. Employing this process, the area being evaluated, then, can quickly be pin-pointed.

### Sermons of Group I

#### The Man Who Was Independent

"Be dependent on nobody" I Thess. 4:12

#### Introduction

##### A. "Be dependent on nobody"

1. Here is a word with a universal appeal.
2. Everybody admires independence.

#### Illustration A

I saw a young mother trying to lead her small boy who was learning to walk. . . . he snatched loose . . . and fell down twice . . . and then he fell into a mud

puddle. His perplexed mother asked "What are you going to do next?" "I am going to get up" . . . At once my hat was off to him. I had to admire his independence.

#### Illustration B

A certain city was dominated by a gangster government. A young lawyer defied them and was elected to minor office. . . . and almost everybody applauded. . . . Later he was offered a larger office by the opposition. He sold out. His once vital independence is [now] as dead as a mummy.

B. We admire independence in the pulpit.

1. In truth, if the prophet loses his independence, he ceases to be a prophet.
2. Illustration: In a letter to a large contributor in opposition to the pastor's prohibition meetings: a young pastor wrote "My dear friend: I see from your letter that you are a convinced wet. It happens that I am a convinced dry. The only way I know to keep my self-respect and to keep your respect for me is to act like what I am. Therefore, the meeting will go on as per schedule."
3. The pastor received a very gracious letter from his wet friend and also continued to receive his large contribution.
  - a. This was not the case, I am sure, because that wet friend had come to agree with his minister.
  - b. It was rather because he was compelled to admire and respect his independence in spite of his inability to agree.

C. Now since everybody admires independence, everybody would like to be independent.

1. Some desire it so much that they are willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to win it.
2. That is true of peoples and nations.
3. It is perhaps truer at this moment than at any other time in history.

D. As we long and struggle for independence as a group, so we do as individuals.

1. Sometimes we struggle foolishly and sometimes wisely.
2. Be that as it may, the struggle still goes on.

I. Now Paul had won the prize for he was in the finest sense independent: what had he achieved?

A. He was independent of things.

1. He, of course, had to have food and clothes.
2. He declared that those who preached the gospel had a right to live off of the gospel. He himself, however, never claimed that right.
3. He told the church at Corinth that he would rather die than to give up the privilege of paying his own way.
4. He delighted in displaying his work-worn hands.
5. He had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content.
6. Paul was not encouraging cheap faith but rather in regards to things he chose to remain independent.

B. He was independent as an apostle.

1. All the other apostles had known Jesus in the flesh.

2. Yet this did not give him a sense of inferiority or of dependence upon his fellow apostles.
    - a. He declared . . . that he had been personally called and commissioned by the Risen Lord, he was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles.
    - b. He was eager that they be in agreement with him.
  3. Be that as it may, this independent man had a gospel all his own.
    - a. Possessed by that gospel, he largely made the channels in which the theological thought of the centuries flowed.
    - b. There was another way in which he was independent.
- C. He was independent with regards to his fellows;
1. He loved deeply and widely.
    - a. His heart was a veritable house of many mansions.
    - b. He numbered all sorts of people among his friends.
    - c. He had, also, a wide assortment of enemies.
  2. But in the presence of all he was grandly independent.
    - a. He was independent in the face of his foes.
    - b. Even though he loved the approval of his peers, he met criticism and opposition with a fine manliness.
      - (1) Paul showed independence to his Roman tormentors while in jail: "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now cast us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out."

(ii) He was too independent to bear such outrage without protest.

3. If Paul was independent in the face of imprisonment, he was equally independent in the presence of threatened death.

"If . . . I . . . have committed anything for which I deserve to die," he declared on one occasion, "I do not seek to escape death."

4. He was independent of his friends.

a. He deeply loved them but he was neither dominated nor swerved from his course by them.

b. Under [Judaizing] pressure even such great souls as Barnabas and Simon Peter surrendered and went over to the conservatives.

(i) But not Paul.

(ii) He not only held his ground but he boldly rebuked his dear brethren of the ministry, though it must have cost him heavily.

c. Perhaps even a sharper test came when certain friends, sure that his proposed visit to Jerusalem would result in tragedy, sought to dissuade him from his purpose: yet he did resist. "For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

5. Here, then, is a man who was grandly independent.

II. How did he get that way?

A. Let it be said that he did not win by casting off all restraint.

1. Independence is a fine virtue.

2. But like many other virtues, when pushed too far, it becomes a vice.

a. It is wise to be cautious, but caution can easily degenerate into cowardice.

b. To conserve is a virtue, but pushed too far it becomes that ghastly sin of miserliness.

3. Even so, while independence is good, if pushed too far it results in disaster.

a. In the days of the judges when "every man did what was right in his own eyes" anarchy resulted.

b. So when everybody . . . does just as he pleases everybody becomes in a measure a slave.

B. Complete independence would wreck the home.

1. I admire the little chap who snatched loose from his mother and went out on his own.

2. But if he continues that course without any kind of restraint, he is likely to wreck himself and to break his mother's heart.

a. When husbands and wives become independent of each other, their marriage goes upon the rocks.

b. When parents become independent of their children, they destroy them through neglect.

3. Complete independence in the home means complete disaster.

C. This is also true in our relationships one with another.

1. What has blackened the reputation of the priest and the Levite?

a. Not the fact that they joined the robbers in their attack upon a certain traveler.

- b. They simply said of the wounded man, "he is none of my business; I cannot be bothered."
  - c. But every man is my business and I am the business of everyone else.
  - d. We are all bound up in a bundle of life with each other.
  - e. To seek merely to save my own life is surely to lose it.
2. Nobody recognized this more clearly than did this independent man Paul. "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all."
  3. His independence, therefore, was not absolute.

#### Conclusion

##### A. What then was his secret?

1. His independence was born of his utter dependence upon God.
  - a. Independence is essentially a religious question.
  - b. Independence toward God is the fountain source of all sin.
  - c. When the prodigal left home he was not seeking to hurt his father. He was only seeking to be independent of him.

##### B. Independence toward God has in it the seed of all tragedy.

1. However, dependence upon him has in it the possibilities of all independence.
  - a. It was Paul's utter dependence upon God that enabled him to be independent in every other relationship.
  - b. It enabled him to meet with triumph and disaster and treat the two imposters just the same.



2. Paul was dependent upon God and thus ultimately independent.
- C. Naturally this type of independence reached its climax in Jesus.
1. How grandly independent Jesus was.
  2. There was never a compromise, never an appeal to the gallery.
  3. When he stood defenseless before Pilate, he towered above him as Pikes Peak above an anthill.
    - a. Pilate's problem was he lacked independence.
    - b. He panicked, went cold, and flung Jesus to the wolves.
- D. But Jesus was dependent only upon God.
1. His dependence upon God was complete.
  2. It was so complete "I can do nothing on my own authority."
  3. That gave him an independence so staggeringly magnificent that he stepped across the threshold of death declaring in spite of his seeming failure, "I have overcome the world."
- E. Everybody admires independence.
1. Everybody struggles in some measure for it.
  2. It is a God-given longing.
  3. But nobody can attain it by traveling the road of rebellion.
  4. We can only reach the high goal by a complete dependence upon God.
  5. Depending fully upon Him, we can fulfill this great word "Be dependent on nobody."

### An Analysis

"Now Paul had won the prize for he was in the finest sense independent" (I Thess. 4:12).

Chappell tells us there is an independence that is worthy. The implied Law here is this: therefore one should strive to acquire this independence. This assertion that one ought to strive for excellence is a Law assertion. IA states Paul was independent of things. The implied Law is that like Paul the reader should be independent of things. Chappell states that Paul had learned that in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. The implication is that this would be a good goal for the one receiving the sermon. One ought to do or feel as Paul did. This is a Law assertion. IA6 states, "Paul was not encouraging cheap faith." Neither should the reader. Again, this is a Law statement. Paul was independent as an apostle. The implication here is the reader or listener should have this independent courage too. This is a Law statement. Paul was independent in relation to his fellows. The reader should also be independent toward his peers. This is an inferred Law statement: Repeatedly Paul is set forth as a model who ought to be emulated. Paul was independent of the approval of his peers, in the face of imprisonment, in the face of death, in the presence of Judaizers, and in confrontation with other apostles and church leaders. The Law's implied judgment is that Paul was independent in these matters and the readers or hearers should also maintain their independence. II states that Paul did not get this courageous independence by casting off all restraints. The Law again suggests that the reader should follow this same path. Any virtue, including independence, can become a vice when overdone. The Law infers that one should not overdo a good thing.

Complete independence would wreck the home. The Law inference is that one should not cast off all restraint and thus wreck the home. The same is also true of relationships [IIC]. One ought to keep his relationship right. This, too, is an inferred Law statement. Paul's independence was not absolute. IIC2 suggests that the Law says one should not be absolutely independent. Paul's secret in Conclusion 1 was that his independence was born of his utter dependence upon God. The inferred Law is clear; the hearer or reader should be utterly dependent upon God also. Conclusion B states "Independence toward God has in it the seed of all tragedy." Therefore, the reader should not be independent of his God. These are statements of inferred Law. Here is what one ought to do and ought not to do and be.

Naturally, Chappell asserts, this independence reached its climax in Jesus. How "grandly independent" Jesus was! The Law inference is one should be like Jesus.

In Conclusion D Chappell stated "But Jesus was dependent only upon God." The hearer should be dependent only upon God. This is also a Law inference. In his final lines Chappell remains faithfully rooted in Law. He states that nobody can attain independence by traveling the road to rebellion. The implied Law is: do not rebel. Chappell concludes: One can only reach the high goal by a complete dependence upon God. The Law assertion in this conclusion is "Depend on God." Chappell's last word is the reaffirmation of his Law-laden text. When one depends fully upon God, one can fulfill this great word; "Be dependent on nobody." Clovis Chappell concludes as he began, with an assertion of the Law.

Rhetorical Paradigm I

Law Ascertaining Questions

"The Man Who was Independent"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes, from start to finish the Law is preached.

- a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes, for there is no explicit thirst-quenching Gospel whatever in this discourse.

- b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes, for there is no balm of the explicit Gospel in this sermon.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes, this sermon brightens the once dulled script and produces the knowledge of sin in the hearer.

- a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

- b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

This sermon is filled with demands.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

The conditions repeatedly given are only to meet the demands.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

This sermon encourages and produces both contrition and despair.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Without the explicit preaching of the Gospel the uninformed sinner is left to his own devices which leads to attempts to receive salvation by works of the Law.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

The subject matter indicates that this homily is directed to secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"The Man Who was Independent"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

It leaves the sinner to his own devices.

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Yes, in the absence of any explicit Gospel the hearer is left to his own attempts at keeping the commands of the Law.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

No.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No.

Begin with God

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" Ex. 20:3

Introduction

A. This evening we are beginning a study of that ancient code known as The Ten Commandments.

1. I have called these old laws Ten Rules for Living.

2. By this I do not mean that they speak the final word on human conduct.

3. I am not forgetting that Jesus summed up these ten words in the one law of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength, . . . and thy neighbor as thy self."
- B. In this day when so many are confused, when so many seem to have flung away from their own convictions and let go their moorings, I am wondering if these rules might not serve as guideposts to finer and fuller living.
1. Naturally, there are those who do not believe that that is the case.
  2. They are sure that this ancient code is fit for nothing but the wastebasket.
- C. It is my conviction that we can no more run past this ancient code than we can run past the north star.
1. The laws are not arbitrary rules.
  2. They partake of the nature of principles.
    - a. I am quite sure that Einstein does not begin each day by a recitation of the multiplication table.
    - b. Yet, great mathematician that he is, he can never ignore the fact that twice two makes four without utter confusion.
    - c. Our modern scientists do not rush to the apple orchard each morning to have confirmed to them the reality of the law of gravitation: yet they cannot ignore that law without disaster.
    - d. The same is true of this ancient code.

(i) To violate it brings disaster to the individual  
and to society as a whole.

(ii) To observe it is to plant our feet on the road  
to a fuller individual and social life.

I. Very appropriately the first commandment begins with God.

A. It has a brief preface: "I am the LORD thy God." "Thou shalt  
have no other gods before me."

1. This code begins with a great assumption.

2. It assumes the reality of God.

3. It begins by asserting that God is.

a. The author of this code makes no effort to prove God.

b. He simply affirms him.

c. In so doing he is in harmony with all the other writers  
of the Bible.

4. The psalmists do not argue about God.

a. They realize Him.

b. They realize Him and rejoice in His mercies.

5. The prophets never undertake to prove God; they proclaim  
Him.

6. This is emphatically true of Jesus.

a. He lived in constant fellowship with the Father.

b. He communed with Him.

c. He did work through the might of His power.

d. He revealed Him, saying, "He that hath seen me hath  
seen the Father."

e. But Jesus never argued about Him.



B. These psalmists and prophets do not take this position, because there is no evidence of God.

1. There are unmistakable evidences of His existence.
2. This ordered universe with its infinite marks of intelligence is one tremendous evidence.
3. But far more convincing than this ordered universe is man himself.
4. Man is far greater than his universe because he can contemplate it.
  - a. He can bridge its rivers.
  - b. He can measure its suns.
  - c. He can weigh its stars.
  - d. He can think, and will, and love.
5. The chief reason, I think, that these great spiritual leaders do not deal with evidences is, first of all because they realize that all evidences are in a sense inadequate.
6. They are more or less indifferent to evidences because they are so sure that they have something far better to offer. They have God Himself.

II. That God is available is the assertion of this first law.

A. God is not only a reality, but he is a reality that is accessible. "I am the LORD thy God. . . . Thou shall have no other gods before me."

1. God is available for human needs.
  - a. I may fall at his feet, if I will, and say with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God."

- b. I may shout with the victorious certainty of St. Paul,  
 "My God shall supply every need of yours according to  
 his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
    - c. Every man, asserts this ancient law, may have God for  
 his very own.
  - B. Since this code was written the Word has become flesh and  
 dwelt among us, and we have been privileged to behold his  
 glory.
    - 1. We have seen Jesus gather little children into His arms.
    - 2. We have seen him bend over outcasts in love and mercy.
    - 3. We have seen Him make every man's burden His own.
    - 4. We have heard Him say, "If God were here, He would be  
 doing just what I am doing."
    - 5. He is here in me, for He that hath seen me hath seen the  
 Father.
  - C. The fact that our conceptions of God change with the passing  
 of the years does not mean that God changes.
    - 1. Our conceptions of the universe have changed but the stars  
 remain the same.
    - 2. In the same way, though our conceptions of God change, God  
 abides, "the same yesterday, today, and forever."
  - D. Whatever else we may miss, no man need miss God.
    - 1. How insistent and appealing is this declaration upon the  
 lips of Jesus.
    - 2. God is ours for the taking.

3. This is the story of the perfect father, of the prodigal son, and the elder brother. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

III. Now since God is available, how are we to come into the richness of our inheritance?

A. How may we come to possess God and be possessed by him? We must meet these certain conditions.

1. Some fail to meet these conditions because we are preoccupied.

- a. "I keep myself busy. I do not allow myself to think about God," one answered frankly.

- b. Some are too interested in land, oxen, and in the newly married wife, to have any time for God.

- c. Naturally these fail to find Him.

2. We do not come to possess any prize by simply ignoring it.

3. Some get rid of God by wishful thinking.

4. Remember: possessing God, we do possess all things.

5. But in spite of this, there are those to whom he is no more than an embarrassment.

- a. Because the fact of God not only brings great privileges but also tremendous responsibilities.

- b. We cannot avoid the obligations that result from sonship to such a father.

B.. What are the conditions of possessing God?

1. "If thou wilt let all other gods go, then thou shalt have me."

- a. There is a saying that when the half-gods go, the gods arrive.
  - b. When our lesser gods go, God Himself arrives.
  - c. That is, we find God when we are willing to give up all else in order to find him.
  - d. These ancient Jews could have the God of Israel only as they were willing to let the gods of the surrounding nations go.
2. We today do not believe in these lesser gods.
  - a. Yet we are polytheists as they.
  - b. We no longer think of Mars as a person, but we worship the things for which he stood with the same loyal devotion of those of the long ago.
  - c. Also that for which Venus stood still lays its enslaving and defiling hand on millions.
  - d. Bacchus, the god of drink, has never been shown greater respect than in wet America today.
3. A few weeks ago the Chamber of Commerce in Dayton, Ohio, investigated how its people spent their money with the following results:
  - a. There was \$113,000 more spent on liquor than on groceries.
  - b. The Central Christian Advocate wrote: "Since 1933 those on relief, who are being supported by the money of the taxpayers, have spent three billion dollars for liquor."

- c. Yes, our gods are still with us, and we still worship them with the same fervor as did those of the long ago.
  - d. The lawyer said, "If you will give up these lesser gods, you may have the real God."
4. Jesus was saying the same thing in a clearer fashion when he declared, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know."
- a. There is a spiritual road to certainty.
  - b. There is the road of the surrendered life. "I have said it before . . . if you will begin here and now to do the will of God as best you know that will . . . sooner or later you will encounter Him upon that road, and you will be able to say, "My Lord and my God."
  - c. A deaf musician, who had lost his career when he became deaf invested in aiding others and found real life.
    - (i) More and more he forgot himself as he took their burdens and their needs upon his own shoulders.
    - (ii) Doing the will of God he came to know him.
    - (iii) So it may be with you and me.

#### Conclusion

- A. God surrounds us as the atmosphere.
  - 1. He is knocking as he woos us with His tender appeal.
  - 2. "If any man will open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

B. This means that if we are willing to give up our lesser gods,  
we shall know the real God.

C. Thus this commandment becomes to us not merely a forbidding  
law, but a radiant gospel.

### An Analysis

"Thou Shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20-3).

Chappell begins his introduction with assertions of the Law.

"Many are confused . . . many have flung away their old convictions and let go the moorings . . ." and the Law here scolds, 'These things ought not so to be.' Again Chappell states, "It is my conviction that we can no more run past this ancient code than we can run past the north star." Man, he warns, cannot get away with disobeying God. These statements are designed to mark out guidelines for Christian behavior and are Law assertions. Chappell suggests that these are actually principles for living and must be obeyed. This is a Law warning. Einstein operated by the rules and so must the reader of this discourse; thus a Law utterance. To violate this ancient code of the Ten Commandments brings disaster to the individual and to society as a whole [Introduction Cd]. Again Chappell sounds a warning of the Law. The code begins with an assumption. It assumes the reality of God. The author here makes no effort to prove God. He simply affirms Him. Here is the way one ought to think and function, asserts the implied Law. Here is the way the Psalmists, the prophets and all of the other inspired writers functioned. The subtle implication of the Law in IA1, 4 and 5 is that this is also how one should think, live, and function today. The Law finally urges: This is emphatically true of Jesus [IA6], and if it is true of Jesus,

then it must also be true of the reader or hearer. Dr. Chappell again states:

The chief reason, I think, that these great spiritual leaders do not deal with evidences is, first of all because they realize that all evidences are in a sense inadequate. They are more or less indifferent to evidences because they are so sure that they have something far better to offer. They have God. [IB5,6].

Evidences are inadequate. The reader has something far better. He should use what he has inside him as the great spiritual leaders used what they had inside them. These are inferences of the Law [IB5,6]. He affirms again in IIA1, God is available for human needs. Thomas fell at his feet and said, "My Lord and my God" and got his needs met and so should the reader. The Law says this is what one ought to do. Chappell then begins to make Gospel-like sounds:

We have seen Jesus gather little children into His arms . . . bend over the outcasts in love and mercy . . . make every man's burden his own [and cry], 'If God were here, He would be doing just what I am . . . He is here in me for he that hath seen me hath seen the Father [IIB1-5].

In III and IIIA, however, he draws another conclusion, "Now since God is available, how are we to come into the richness of our inheritance. . . . We must meet these certain conditions." This is a Law conclusion for it demands of the hearer what he must do or not do and be or not be. Again, Chappell says to his hearers or readers: "If thou wilt let all other gods go then thou shalt have me" [IIIB1]. That is, one finds God when one is willing to give up all else in order to have him. The action is demanded of the hearer. Again, this is a decree of the Law. One must change to receive this benefit. There is considerable evidence that twentieth century man is polytheistic as were the men of old. Modern man must change. One cannot be a polytheist and do the will of God. This is a Law statement of judgment and condemnation as is also

the following statement. "Bacchus, the god of drink, has never been shown greater respect than in wet America" [IIIB2]. Chappell says again:

There is a spiritual road to certainty. That is the road of the surrendered life . . . if you will begin here and now to do the will of God as best you know that will . . . sooner or later you will encounter Him on that road, and you will be able to say, "My Lord and my God" [III4a,b].

This is purely a Law section. One must find the road to certainty, accomplish the surrendered life and do the will of God. These are the oughts, the do's and the commands of the Law. There is not one breath of Gospel in it.

In his conclusion Chappell makes a few Gospel sounds.

God surrounds us as the atmosphere . . . He is knocking as he woos us with His tender appeal . . . 'If any man will open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me' [Conclusion A1,2].

But Chappell discontinues these Gospel sounds and falls back upon the preaching of the Law. ". . . If we are willing to give up our lesser gods, we shall know the real God." He concludes his sermon on the first commandment by declaring that the first commandment is in reality ". . . not merely a forbidding law, but a radiant gospel" [Conclusion C]. Yet he has only preached the Law and there is not a shred of explicit Gospel in it.

### Rhetorical Paradigm I

#### Law Ascertaining Questions

"Begin with God"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes, in its entirety.

a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.



b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes, it is almost wholly given to this pursuit.

a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes, continually.

b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

It is very demanding.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, there is condition upon condition.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes, both by inference and demand.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

By its content it should have been directed to secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"Begin with God"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

Yes. "If I let all other gods go: the gods of drink [if I become an abstainer], reject sexual lust, and all other defiling habits . . ." The implication is, "You need to give up all other things [clean yourself up] and if you will give up these lesser gods, you may have the real God." Chappell's "Gospel" here is purely the bondage of the Law.

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Yes. See No. 3.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel here.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

No. In Gospel Paradigm items 3 and 5, Chappell clearly commingles Law and Gospel.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No.

#### The Lost Blessing

"Blessed is he who reads, and blessed are those who listen  
to the words of this prophecy  
and lay to heart what is written in it." Rev. 1:3

#### Introduction

The book of Revelation begins with a pronouncement of a twofold blessing, a blessing upon the reader and a blessing upon the hearer who takes the message to heart.

A. But if there is a blessing for those who take this book seriously, it is one that the modern church has in large measure lost. This is true for the following reasons:

1. The vast majority of professing Christians lost this blessing through neglect.

- a. Many of us seldom read any part of the Bible.

- b. But even those who read it with constant devotion often leave this particular book severely alone.
    - c. For this reason Revelation is for most people a tightly closed book.
  - 2. Then a second group miss the promised blessing because they misread and misinterpret the book.
    - a. But in spite of widespread neglect and
    - b. In spite of fanciful interpretation,
    - c. I am firmly convinced that this book has a message for today.
    - d. It is especially fitting . . . at this trying hour when the red hell of war [WWII] is now raging all around the world.
    - e. Because of this fierce tempest that has broken upon us, we especially need something to keep alive and to strengthen our faith.
    - f. I believe we can find some needed help in this book.
- B. I am convinced that the book of Revelation is about the most daringly hopeful, the most dauntlessly optimistic book to be found in the New Testament.
  - 1. This is saying a great deal.
  - 2. But I believe a faithful study of the book will convince us of its truth.
- I. Why is this book so little read and so often misread?
  - A. One reason is the peculiar style in which it is written.
    - 1. Revelation belongs to that type of literature known as apocalyptic.

2. This is a type of prophecy that came into being after the Exile.
  3. The apocalyptic prophet . . . [spoke in such a way] that his message could be comprehensible for those for whom it was intended but hidden from those outside.
- B. This type of prophet also had a different emphasis.
1. Prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah put their emphasis on man's duty to his God and to his brother.
  2. The apocalyptic prophet, preaching in times of crisis and danger, put his emphasis on what God was to do for man.
  3. This seer of Patmos, speaking to the Christian Church, sought to speak in a fashion that Christians could understand while his meaning would be veiled from others.
  4. He proclaims his message by means of visions and symbols.
  5. It is a book of pure poetry: a book of songs.
  6. To interpret it literally is to miss its real meaning.
- C. It is written in a style of visions and symbols.
1. For instance, the numbers used in the book are used in a symbolic rather than a mathematical sense.
    - a. To Jews certain numbers had very definite meanings.
    - b. That is true to some extent with us: for example, the number 13 affects our thinking.
    - c. For the Jews there were many such numbers.
      - (i) There was the number 3 for family.
      - (ii) There was the number 4 for the world.
      - (iii) There was 7 for summing up of heaven and earth.
      - (iv) The evil number in the book is 6.

a'. The evil of six is that it falls short of 7.

b'. This carries out the New Testament idea of sin which is the missing of the mark. Sin is falling short.

c'. Wickedness at its worst was 6 repeated three times -- 666.

d'. In the man represented by 666, Dr. Jekyll was dead and Hyde alone was left alive.

(v) To symbolize the imperfect, they divided the perfect by two.

a'. This equals  $3\frac{1}{2}$  which means incompleteness.

b'. The author is fond of this number.

c'. He speaks of a time and times and a half time [ $3\frac{1}{2}$ ].

d'. And again he tells of certain events that last 42 months [or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years].

e'. And again he uses 1260 days [which is again  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years].

2. This book written in visions and symbols is best understood by those who bring to it a mind saturated by the Old Testament.

3. One writer asserts that of its 404 verses, 278 are either quoted or colored by passages in the Old Testament.

II. What was the purpose of this book?

A. It was written to hearten the church of that dark and difficult day.

1. He was a prophet who spoke to his own day and people.
  2. His message therefore always was timely and therefore timeless.
  3. Human nature remains unchanged through all the changing years.
  4. Even historical situations have a strange way of repeating themselves.
  5. We need not be surprised, therefore, when we realize that this message to the church of the first century has something to say to the church of the twentieth century.
- B. This book is thought to have been written during the reign of Domitian, who was Emperor of Rome from 81 to 96.
1. During his reign emperor worship was becoming compulsory.
  2. Everybody was expected to do homage to the statue of Caesar:
  3. This was a patriotic procedure that had somewhat the same meaning that saluting the flag has with us.
  4. Rome was very tolerant in matters of religion: The Roman subject or citizen might worship any god he pleased provided he included Caesar.
  5. But while Rome was tolerant, Christianity was not.
    - a. These stubborn Christians refused to burn incense to the statue of the emperor.
    - b. Rome looked upon such rebellious conduct as high treason.

- c. For this reason she set herself to the task of destroying this unreasonable sect.
- d. It was, therefore, to encourage these few and scattered Christians to face the persecution that John wrote his book.
- e. In this hour of terrible crisis . . . the Seer of Patmos called the church to a vigorous faith that would enable its members to be loyal even unto death.

III. How did he seek to accomplish this purpose?

A. He did so by making certain disclosures.

1. There is the disclosure of the church.

- a. John as Christ's spokesman sends seven different messages to seven churches of Asia.
- b. He speaks as one intimately acquainted with these seven churches: perhaps he has preached in all of them.
- c. He knows them: their weaknesses, their strengths.
- d. He knows the opposition and the persecution they have met.
- e. Of course, there were more than seven churches in Asia, but he uses seven in its symbolic sense.
- f. In speaking, therefore, to the seven churches, he is speaking to the church as a whole.

(i) This church to whom he spoke was in comparison to the empire very small.



(ii) Less than one tenth of one percent of the population of the Roman Empire at this time was Christian.

(iii) It was without compact organization: Its one bond of union was that of loyalty to the common Lord.

(iv) It was a church whose membership was not perfect: so it is today.

g. In spite of its imperfections it was symbolized by a golden lampstand.

(i) It was not light in itself, but because the Risen Christ walked in its midst and held its messengers in his own right hand.

(ii) It, then, was able to be the light of the world.

(iii) Thus John discloses the church with the Risen Christ in the midst.

B. The second disclosure is the foe of the church.

1. Evil is incarnate in one great organization - the Roman Empire.

2. It is called by a variety of names, the most fitting of which is "the Beast".

a. It was great in physical proportions and it was unconquerable.

b. It had a population of 100 million.

3. The real opposition that Rome was able to offer was that growing out of her moral rottenness.

- a. The Rome of that time had passed from the higher standards of other days.
  - b. She was on a swift toboggan toward utter decay.
  - c. Marriage had fallen into utter disrepute.
  - d. Homes were a wreck and sixty million slaves were doing the work of the world.
  - e. The Roman citizen looked upon work with contempt and lived off of a dole.
  - f. Life was meaningless . . . save as men and women sought thrills through sexual vice and the slaughter of gladiatorial contests.
  - g. The church faced a rotten and rotting society that was vast in its extent and more appallingly vast in its degradation.
- C. The third disclosure of the seer is the conflict between this weak church on the one hand and Rome on the other.
- 1. He never seeks to disguise the fact that there is a conflict.
  - 2. He is sure that Rome will either destroy the church or the church will destroy Rome: for it is a fight to the death. "Think not," said Jesus, "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword."
  - a. Life, for the Christian is a battle.
    - (i) "Put on the whole armor of God."
    - (ii) ". . . fight the good fight of faith,"
    - (iii) ". . . lay hold on eternal life."

- b. Of course, the sword of which he speaks was spiritual and not physical.
  - c. There is a deadly conflict between the church here, and the forces of evil.
- D. The fourth disclosure is that of our Great Ally: "I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven."
  - 1. Through the open door John saw a vision of the Throne and the God who sits upon it.
  - 2. He sees that in spite of all that seems to the contrary: God still reigns.
    - a. The God upon this throne is a "holy" God.
    - b. God is holy and perfectly pure and sinless.
    - c. This pure holy God is the enemy of all sin and evil.
    - d. He is also omnipotent: He is almighty.
      - (i) This is a characteristic of God that I fear does not brace the church as it braced our fathers.
      - (ii) We are greatly in need of a new sense of God's Almightyness.
      - (iii) The God of John's vision is an almighty God: who is the eternal foe of all evil.
  - 3. The God of John's vision is also a loving and suffering God.
    - a. The Seer sees in the midst of the Throne a Lamb as if it had been slain.
    - b. "God is not only omnipotent, but is one who is being 'wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.'" He is our Lover.

- c. He loves so genuinely that he will spare himself no pain to destroy evil and to establish his kingdom in the earth.
  4. John therefore, heartens himself as he seeks to hearten others by reminding them that a holy, almighty, suffering, and sacrificial God is upon the throne.
- E. The final disclosure is that of victory.
1. John knows something of the weakness of the church and the might of Rome.
  2. Faced by what seems stark impossibilities, he is absolutely sure of victory.
  3. He is sure of victory because he is sure of God.
  4. Because he is thus sure he faces the future unafraid and he sings:
    - a. "The sovereignty of the world now belongs to our Lord and His Christ."
    - b. Then near the end of the book he reaches a grand climax. "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."
    - c. What a faith for a day like ours.
      - (i) What courage it gave and still gives to those who share it.
      - (ii) We can face any danger unafraid if we are thus sure of God and of final victory.
    - d. He believed that his mighty Lord was going to conquer Rome by destroying it.
      - (i) God did something far better.

(ii) He conquered it by converting it.

#### Conclusion

A. What has this to say to us?

1. We are a part of the church that John disclosed.
2. His conflict in large measure is ours.
3. His omnipotent Christ is ours also.
4. Therefore his victory may be our victory.

B. In our spiritual conflict we are not fighting for ourselves alone.

1. We are fighting for better men, for better homes, for a better church, for a better world.
2. "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."
3. Let us therefore go forward in the fellowship of our victorious Lord, in the assurance that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all our powers to ask or think.

#### An Analysis: Rev. 1:3

While the text begins with a twofold blessing to the one who obeys its demand, it is none the less a creature of the Law. "This will bless you, therefore do this:" it demands. Dr. Chappell begins his sermon by laying down the implicit do's, don'ts and oughts and ought-nots of life. Note in Introduction A "But if there is a blessing for those who take this book seriously, it is one that the modern church has in large measure lost." In other words the modern church had not done

what it "ought" to have done. This is a Law statement. Indictments of the Law are replete in this discourse.

The vast majority of professing Christians lose this blessing through neglect. . . . Many of us seldom read any part of the Bible . . . but even those who read it with constant devotion often leave this particular book [Revelation] severely alone. . . . Then a second group misses the promised blessing because they misread and misinterpret the book [Introduction A1-2].

Professing Christians who do these things are neglectful and/or misinterpreters of the book. Christians should not be neglectful and omit reading the book of Revelation. This work should not be misread or misinterpreted. These are all condemnations of the Law. Chappell introduces Part II with a rhetorical question that at once raises hope and stirs the interest of the reader or hearer. What was the purpose of this book [of Revelation]? "It was written to hearten the church of that dark and difficult day. [And this] message to the church of the first century has something to say to the church of the twentieth century" [IIA5]. Again Chappell states: "In this hour of terrible crisis . . . the Seer of Patmos called the church to a vigorous faith that would enable its members to be loyal even unto death" [IIBe]. This is Law. The Law cries out, "The church must be strong, she must stand the test, she must have vigorous faith and she ought to do well!" This entire appeal is rooted in the demands of the Law. In IIIAfv Chappell says, "In speaking, therefore, to the seven churches, he is speaking to the church as a whole . . . it was a church whose membership was not perfect: so it is today." The inference of the Law is: the church of the first century did not do all that it should have done. It fell short and so has the contemporary church or the hearers of this word today. These are indictments of the Law.

Dr. Chappell lightens the burden of the Law momentarily and, in spite of her infirmities, places Christ at the center of His imperfect church.

In spite of its imperfections, it [the church of the book of Revelation] was symbolized by a golden lampstand. It was not light in itself, but [it was light] because the Risen Christ walked in its midst and held its messengers in his own right hand [IIIAgi].

Chappell again applies the Law. "The real opposition that Rome was able to offer [the church] was that [opposition of] evil growing out of her moral rottenness" [IIIB3]. The church is in a life or death struggle." Since for the Christian life is a battle then she must: "Put on the whole armor of God" [a Law demand] ". . . and fight the good fight of faith" [another Law demand] ". . . and lay hold on eternal life" [IIICi, ii, iii]. All three declarations are simply commands of the Law. "There is a deadly conflict between the church here, and the forces of evil" [IIIBc]. The strong implication here is: Christians need to arm for the fight. This, too, is a demand of the Law by inference. In IIID Chappell asserts, "We are greatly in need of a new sense of God's almightiness." This follows on the heels of the accusation, "This is a characteristic of God that I fear does not brace the church as it braced our fathers" [IIDdiii]. Both of these assessments are nothing less than stinging judgments of the Law.

In section IIIDa, b, and c, Chappell does portray the God of John's Gospel as a loving God. A God who is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Yet there is no explicit Gospel proclaimed. Chappell does not say "This is the forgiveness of sin." A Gospel that does not proclaim the forgiveness of sins is no Gospel at all.

In section III and IIIEd in his conclusions, Chappell edges slightly toward the Gospel, "He believed that his mighty Lord was going to conquer Rome by destroying it . . . but God did something far better . . . He conquered it by converting it." This would have been an opportune moment for Chappell to soothe crushed sinners with the comforting message of the Gospel, and would have been an opportunity to preach the forgiveness of sins. In stead, Chappell does what he has done so consistently before, he lets the moment pass with not a word of comforting, explicit Gospel for his hearers. They apparently depart still writhing under the Law that crushes and destroys but cannot save. He concludes:

In our spiritual conflict we are not fighting for ourselves alone. . . . We are fighting for better men, for better homes, for a better church, for a better world. . . . Let us, therefore, go forward in the fellowship of our victorious Lord. . . ." [Conclusion B1, 2, C].

All this he urges without once explicitly telling the poor undone sinner, crushed by the Law, how to enter this "fellowship of our victorious Lord."

### Rhetorical Paradigm I

#### Law Ascertainning Questions

"The Lost Blessing"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes, continually.

a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.



2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

- a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

- b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes, only demands.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, you must be steadfast and fight the good fight of faith.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes, for godliness in this sermon is "fighting the good fight of faith."

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

By content analysis, it should be directed to secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"The Lost Blessing"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

"Keep the commandments like John's church did," is the continual inference.

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Only the Law is preached.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No, only the Law is preached.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

There was commingling of Law and Gospel, for the Gospel was not preached in predominance.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No, there is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

#### The Unfinished Sermon

"And as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled and answered, 'To thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'" Acts 24:25

#### Introduction

A. Felix was a black sheep.

1. He was so very black that he was conspicuous, even in a day when this color was more prevalent among politicians than it is today.
2. Born a slave, Felix had managed in some way to win his freedom.
3. Not only so, but by dint of considerable ability and of far more rascality he had worked his way up to a position of power.
4. But in spite of his lofty position, he was still a moral pigmy.

B. Whatever sovereignty he had was on the outside of him.

1. Within he was still in bondage.
2. Tacitus tells us that he ruled in the spirit of a slave with all cruelty and lust.

3. He was, therefore, the very last man that we expected to find looking toward the heights in seeming quest of a better life.

C. But even this hardened man had one big moment that was full of promise.

1. As the scene opens, we are greeted by a joyful surprise.
  - a. We find Felix at church.
  - b. This does not mean that he has gone out to God's house, but that he has brought God's messenger to himself.
2. He has sent for Paul to hear him concerning his faith in Christ.
  - a. Sad to say, Felix is at this service with a heavy handicap.
  - b. Beside him is a woman who is not his wife: She is the wife of another.
  - c. The woman is a Jewess by the name of Drusilla.
  - d. She had a better opportunity religiously than Felix, but she made little of it.
  - e. She is as fair outwardly as she is rotten inwardly, which means that she is a very beautiful woman.
  - f. But in spite of this sordid relationship, in spite of his soiled past and his dirty present, Felix has come to church.
3. Felix has come to church of his own free will.
  - a. That in itself gives us hope.
  - b. [It, however, raises a question].

I. What has brought Felix to church?

A. He may have been prompted by mere curiosity.

1. He knew something of Paul.

2. He had met him face to face.

a. Only yesterday he had presided at a brief court session where Paul was at once the prisoner at the bar and the attorney for the defense.

b. The preacher had handled his case with such consummate skill as to win the grudging admiration of Felix.

c. There was no mistaking the fact that the prisoner was no ordinary man.

(i) Even his enemies had to confess that he had turned the world upside down.

(ii) Perhaps Felix wanted to see his amazing prisoner at closer range.

(iii) Therefore, he sent for him and sat under his ministry, but with no higher motive than idle curiosity.

B. Felix may have sent for Paul because he was bored.

1. When Felix had won his freedom, he chose a name for himself that signifies "happy."

2. But Mr. Happy was not in reality happy at all.

a. He was tired, bored; fed up.

b. [This is true] though he had given reign to every lust, life had lost its tang.

3. Felix was greatly in need of a new thrill.

a. There is pleasure in sin of course, but it soon grows stale.

- b. This is because sin has nothing new up its sleeve.
  - c. It has been well said that if a rake from Babylon were to come back and visit our night life, he would stifle a yawn and say, "I saw all this in Babylon more than twenty-five centuries ago."
  - d. Maybe Felix attended this service because he was bored.
- C. Felix may have been present because of a desire for material gain.
- 1. Luke tells us that, when later on, he sent for Paul, it was in the hope that Paul would give him a bribe for setting him free.
  - 2. If Felix was thus trying to capitalize on his church attendance, he would not be in a class entirely by himself.
    - a. There have been those throughout the centuries who have sought to use the church.
    - b. Some have made it a smoke screen behind which to hide their rascality.
    - c. Others have attended because they had something to sell, or were eager to advance their ambitions.
    - d. I am quite certain that there are comparatively few of these.
    - e. Yet there are some and Felix may have been of this number.
  - 3. He [Felix] may have listened to Paul with no higher motives than those that prompt a gambler to take part in a game of chance.

D. But suppose we give this royal rascal the benefit of the doubt . . . [and] assume that he attended this service because he really had a hungry heart.

1. Suppose we concede . . . [in him] a longing for a better life.

2. This is not an unreasonable assumption.

a. [For] such longings have stirred, times without number, in the hearts of men just as hopeless and hard as Felix.

b. What faithful minister has not spoken with fear and trembling to some man regarded as hopeless, to find himself answered, not by insults as he feared, but by eager longing and penitential tears?

3. It may be, therefore, that Felix was at church, even as you and I, because he was possessed of an insatiable hunger for God.

4. But after all, while the motives of Felix in attending this service are of importance, they are not of supreme importance.

a. Illustration. The proprietor of a certain department store had this motto pasted behind the counter where it can be seen only by his salesmen: "It is not what the customer comes in after, but what he goes out with, that matters".

b. So it is with church attendance:

(i) Many that have come to scoff remained to pray.

(ii) This is Paul's hope as he faces Felix.

II. What did Paul have to say to this sinner and his paramour?

A. They [Felix and Drusilla] are sinners but so are we.

1. The difference between us is one of degree rather than kind.
2. Therefore, what Paul said to them he is saying to you and me.
3. Let us then, along with them, take our place at the feet of this messenger of God.

B. It is my conviction that Paul's sermon is motivated and shot through with love.

1. Love is the very warp and woof of it.
2. I am sure of this because of the effect it had upon the hearer.
3. It is true that love is not mentioned in the fragment of the sermon that we have, but bear in mind that Paul did not get to finish his sermon.

a. The physician had hardly finished diagnosing the disease before the patient walked out on him.

b. Felix adjourned the meeting.

(i) He left the service before the benediction.

(ii) Therefore, we have only a part of Paul's sermon, that part that was meant to search this man's soul.

(iii) Look at it.

C. Paul reasoned of righteousness.

1. I like that word "reasoned". He did not rant.
  - a. He did not merely beat the air.



b. He did not go off in sentimental gush.

c. He reasoned as he spoke of sanity.

(i) He spoke of sanity, the thorough going common sense, of being right and doing right.

a'. He showed that sin is insanity. In doing so he was taking his cue from his Master.

1'. Jesus told the story of the prodigal son and He explained the boy's conduct, not by saying that he was too clear headed to stay at home.

2'. He said rather that he was beside himself.

3'. The stupidity, the madness of the wrong-doer, is seen in the fact that such a one flings himself against the forces of the universe.

4'. The very stars in their courses fight against him.

b'. The one supremely sane something, on the other hand was righteousness.

1'. A righteous God can give his full sanction to a righteous man, and to none other.

2'. He can put all his infinite resources at his disposal.

3'. Righteousness, therefore, is fundamental.

c'. There is no really sane living without it.

1'. Surely there is no vital Christianity without it.

2'. No amount of work, no amount of religiosity, nothing is a substitute for right living.

3'. The early apostles had this attitude when they said: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

(i') What is the meaning of this answer but "our first purpose is not to save our own skins . . . but to do right as God gives us to see the right."

(ii') This, too, is to be our purpose.

(iii') Absolutely nothing can take the place of that.

d'. The call of this hour and of every hour is for righteousness for rightness.

e'. We need to be right with God and right with man [and in all of our relationships].

f'. Naturally Paul reasoned of righteousness.

D. Paul reasoned of temperance -- self-mastery, self-control.

1. He tried to make Felix see something of the tragedy of changing a habitation meant for the Holy Spirit into a pigsty.
2. He tried to bring him to the realization that self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone, lead to sovereign power.
3. Paul spoke home to this man's need: He reasoned of temperance.

E. Paul reasoned of judgment to come.

1. The Bible speaks of this judgment again and again.
2. And there is always sanity in what it says.
3. I find it easy to believe in a judgment to come because of judgment of the past and of the present.
  - a. Judgment is something that is taking place all of the time.
  - b. God is constantly coming in judgment upon nations and upon individuals.
    - (i) God came in judgment on despots and tyrants and they passed away.
    - (ii) Europe is experiencing the judgment of God at this moment and therefore hanging upon the verge of the abyss.
  - c. As God judges the world, even so he judges the individual.
    - (i) This he does in the very nature of things.

(ii) Every time I stand at the fork of the road and take the lower instead of the higher, I undergo judgment.

a'. This is my sentence: I find it easier ever after to take the lower road and harder to take the higher.

b'. When I face the light and refuse to see it, I am judged in that I lose, in some measure, my capacity to see.

c'. When I hear the truth and refuse to respond to it, my sentence is that I become a little more dull of hearing.

d'. When my heart is stirred by the wooing of the Spirit and I refuse to yield, my sentence is that I lose my sensitiveness.

e'. Paul reasoned of righteousness, of temperance, and of judgment.

III. What effect did this sermon have on Felix?

A. Felix did not resent this preaching and become angry.

1. It would have been very natural for this royal sinner to have resented such plain preaching.
2. But he did not get angry.

B. What was the effect of Paul's sermon? [I repeat.]

1. I saw Felix clench his fist till his knuckles grew white; his nails bit into the palms of his hands.
2. I saw him shake like a man in the grip of a heavy chill.

3. Then with a cry that was half a sob he cried, "It's enough, Paul, I know you are right."
4. "Go thy way for this time: It's not convenient for me to respond to your message today. When I have a moment, I will call for you."
5. Thus Felix interrupted the apostle just as he was reaching the climax of his sermon.
  - a. Had he waited a moment, Paul would have told him of a Christ that was able to make him right at the center of his being . . . he could become new.
  - b. Had he listened only a little longer, Paul would have told him of one that could set him free, in whose fellowship he need never come into judgment.
    - (i) But the sermon was never finished.
    - (ii) Felix adjourned the meeting and left.
6. In later days he sent for Paul again and again.
  - a. But he never trembled any more.
  - b. For two whole years he lived in the same house with this great saint, but that privilege was worth no more to Felix than if Paul had been a mummy.
7. Felix had missed the high tide of the Spirit, that, taken at the flood, would have led him to life.

IV. Why did Felix fail? Why did he face his big moment only to throw it away?

A. He did not fail because of ignorance. He understood far too clearly for his comfort.

1. We confess that ours is a day of moral confusion.

2. Many of us have so lost our skyline that we cannot tell where the earth leaves off and the heaven begins.
  3. Our trouble is . . . that we fail to live up to what we actually know.
- B. Felix did not fail because his clay soul was so shattered as to be beyond remaking.
1. That is never the case.
  2. He failed because he refused to give God a chance.
  3. God, through his prophet, woke him up; but that was all that even God could do.
    - a. He wakes us up.
    - b. But we must do the getting up.
    - c. Felix might have risen into newness of life, if he had only responded to Paul's appeal.
- C. But, though deeply moved, Felix was not willing to pay the price.
1. There was a woman at his side more hardened in the way of sin than even himself.
  2. So far as we know she was not moved in the least.
    - a. In fact, I can well imagine that she looked upon both the blazing preacher and trembling hearer with superior scorn.
    - b. Felix dared not defy that scorn.
  3. Then there was a yet greater difficulty.
    - a. For Felix to respond would mean that he must give up Drusilla altogether.
    - b. That he could not do: at least not yet.

- c. Thus when he might have been free, he remained a slave.
- 4. Felix belongs to that vast company that come very near to doing something worthwhile and yet fall short.
  - a. They are the almost folks whose stories are unspeakably pathetic.
  - b. We meet them in every walk of life.
  - c. Felix came near to being rich spiritually, but he remained morally bankrupt.
  - d. Some fail as Felix did because they never come to the point.
  - e. They feel the spell of Jesus but never come to the point.
  - f. I had a young friend who "almost became a Christian" but was lost to a disease.
- 5. There are others who fail because though they decide, they do so half-heartedly, or for some reason fail to follow through.
  - a. These dwell in the suburbs of Christianity.
  - b. But they never venture down into the heart of the city where the lights are bright and where the great traffic of the soul is carried on.
    - (i) They are religious but their religion is of a kind that satisfies neither God nor man.
    - (ii) This is the case because almost to do a thing is not to do it at all.
    - (iii) Almost to find life is only to find death.

## Conclusion

Therefore, I am calling my own heart as well as yours, to a full dedication to Him who is able to do for us and through us beyond our power to ask or think.

## An Analysis: Acts 24:25

Chappell begins "The Unfinished Sermon" underscoring Felix's moral weakness, cruelty, lust and general bondage. These character sketches by Chappell actually allow the reader to look into the mirror of life that he vividly describes and identify certain attributes of Felix's character that they too possess. So, in effect, the judgment poured out on Felix is also a judgment on the hearer. This is a Law technique for it brings judgment, condemnation, and terror on the subject of its focus. The preacher, like a skilled artist, transfers the courtroom scene of Felix's chamber to the local church auditorium. Here the legal hearing of Paul, in Felix's court, becomes a moment of truth in Chappell's sanctuary.

This is an effective and clever rhetorical device of a seasoned orator. Chappell demonstrates another of his abilities as a master of spoken drama. But again, the objective is obviously to convict and to terrorize the hearer. It is clearly preaching of the Law.

In his imaginative preaching he castigates stiff-neckedness, adultery, hardheartedness and rebellion: all are castigations of the Law.

In I, Chappell, using the same rhetorical tools, raised the question about his subject, "What brought Felix to church?" In reality Chappell was calling for each hearer to ask the same question of himself.



Was the hearer bored, or tired or fed up? These were Chappell's spoken questions. "What about this reader?", was his unspoken question.

"Felix was greatly in need of a new thrill" [IB3]. Is that the reader's problem too? "There is pleasure in sin, but it grows stale for there is nothing new up its sleeve" [IB1-3]. This brings boredom. Is that the reader's problem? This is nothing more than a subtle preaching of the Law. One becomes stale because of sin! Is this not the reader's problem? Is he not guilty because of sin! This is the disturbing voice of the Law. In IC2 Chappell suggests, "Was Felix trying to capitalize on his church attendance?" What about this reader's motives? "There have been those throughout the centuries who have sought to use the church" [IC2a]. Is that what the reader is also doing, questions the Law. Felix may have listened to Paul with no higher motives than those that prompt a gambler to take part in a game of chance [IE3]. What are the motives of this hearer? the Law asks. In ID3, after raising some soul-searching questions, he turns and gives his hearers the benefit of the doubt. "It may be, therefore, that Felix was at church, even as you and I, because he was possessed of an insatiable hunger for God." However, in IIA and A1, Chappell uncovered his true thinking in these words:

They, Felix and Drusilla, are sinners but so are those who are hearing the message today. The difference between the two is "one of degree rather than kind." There, Paul said to them what he is saying to the hearer now. "Let us then, along with them, take our place at the feet of this messenger of God" [IIA1, 2, and 3]. Chappell asserts Paul's power was that of love coupled with reason. Paul, in love, reasoned in righteousness. He did not rant or beat the air nor did he go off in sentimental gush. The Law implies and neither should the hearer of

this discourse. He spoke of sanity that is common-sense righteousness. Paul showed sin to be insanity. The stupidity and madness of the wrongdoer is seen in the fact that such a one flings himself against the forces of the universe. The very stars in their course fight against him. This is the vernacular of the Law. Chappell adds:

The one supremely sane something . . . was righteousness. . . .  
A righteous God can give his full sanction to a righteous man,  
and to none other. . . . Righteousness is fundamental [IIC1b'1',  
3'].

Therefore, shouts the Law, be righteous!

Paul reasoned of temperance, that is, self-mastery, self-control, and debunked self-reverence and self-indulgence. In IID2 Chappell stated, ". . . [Paul] tried to bring [Felix] to the realization that self-reverence, self-knowledge, and self-control . . . alone, lead to sovereign power." The Law implicitly suggests to the hearer one ought to develop these things so he can be right! Chappell, then, proceeds to speak of the judgment of God. This is one place where Chappell could have written and spoken with real integrity. Instead, however, of speaking clearly of man's sin and God's wrath and judgment, he chose another course. Chappell deteriorated into moralistic rationalizations. In confusing the judgment of God, because of sin, with living with the consequence of good or bad personal judgment, Chappell demonstrated a significant aspect of his thinking. While preaching Law to the extent of a near total exclusion of the Gospel, he, in reality, demonstrates that he understands neither Law nor Gospel clearly. In IV Chappell raises the question: "Why did Felix fail?" He failed, Chappell added, because he refused to pay the price. In these instances the Law fairly shouts: Is the reader willing to pay the price? Is that

why the reader has done no better? Is there not a lack of dedication and self-giving? These are questions of the Law that terrorize, crush and destroy.

Felix belongs to that vast company that comes very near to doing something worthwhile and yet falls short [IVC4]. They are the almost folks whose stories are unspeakably pathetic. We meet them in every walk of life. Felix came near to being rich spiritually, but he remained a moral bankrupt [IVC4a, b, c].

Some fail, asserts Chappell, because they never come to the point [IVC4d]. Is this the hearer? the Law asserts. Does the hearer not fail and fall short? Yes, surely, there is guilt here. Chappell wields one last thrust of the Law sword as he debunks half-hearted Christianity and concludes with a fetching yarn about a diseased young man who was an "almost but lost" tragedy. He, then, declares that the half-hearted ones are religious but theirs is a religion that satisfies neither God nor man because ". . . to almost do a thing is not to do it at all. Almost to find life is only to find death" [IVC5bii, iii]. Condemnation and judgment are the substance of this conclusion and therefore it is a Law conclusion. Chappell's final word, though winsome and appealing, is a word of crushing Law. "Therefore, I am calling my heart as well as yours, to a full dedication to Him who is able to do for us and through us beyond our power to ask or think" [Conclusion]. This last word is reminiscent of Gospel promises but the motivation is clearly the "ought" or "we must" of the Law.

This sermon ends with no explicit Gospel and abounds page after page with the threats and crushing inferences of the Law.

Rhetorical Paradigm ILaw Ascertaining Questions"The Unfinished Sermon"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes.

- a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

- b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

- a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

- b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, you must "pay the price."

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes. In this sermon Godliness is "paying the price" and "doing something worthwhile."

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

To secure sinners.

Rhetorical Paradigm II

Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"The Unfinished Sermon"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

Yes, "pay the price."

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

It offers little and commands altogether.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No, only the Law is preached.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

The Law was preached in predominance. This constitutes commingling.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No.

### Sermons of Group II

#### The Great Refusal -- Jonah

Jonah 1:1-8

#### Introduction

There is doubtless not another book in the literature of the world that has suffered more at the hands of men than the book of Jonah.

1. It has been tortured by its enemies,
2. And wounded in the house of its friends.

A. We have been so prone to give attention to the non-essentials in the book rather than the essentials.

1. We have had such keen eyes for the seemingly ridiculous and the bizarre.

2. For this reason it has come to pass that you can hardly mention the name of Jonah to a modern audience without provoking a smile.
- B. Thus Jonah, coming to us as an evangelist, is mistaken by many for a clown.
- C. Now this is a calamity . . . because the book of Jonah is one of the gems of literature.
1. There is not another book in the Old Testament that is more fragrant with the breath of inspiration.
  2. There is not another book more radiant with the light of the divine love.
  3. It is a wonderful gospel in itself.
    - a. Therefore it is a great pity that we have turned from its winsome wealth.
    - b. To give ourselves to the unedifying task of measuring the size of a fish's throat.

An Illustration: Paraphrased

1. A group of hungry men were invited to a feast.
  - a. They found the table spread with the viands of a king.
  - b. A discussion arose concerning the table holding the food and the guests began to argue over its design and carpentry so long and heatedly that the food went totally to waste.
  - c. The guests left more hungry than when they had come.

A Second Illustration

2. There is, also, the story of a prince who decided to marry a peasant girl.

- a. To seal his pledge of marriage he sent her a wonderful engagement ring encased in a beautiful box.
- b. The girl was more interested in the box than the ring, and the prince was humiliated to find, upon his arrival, his intended was wearing the box and not the ring.

D. There is real jewelry here [in the book of Jonah so] let us forget the rather queer casket in which this jewel comes while we examine the treasure.

I. God spoke to Jonah

"The Word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for its wickedness has come up before me.'"

A. "The Word of the LORD came unto Jonah."

- 1. There is nothing crude about that statement.
- 2. There is nothing in that to excite our ridicule.

B. That is one of the blessed and thrilling truths of the ages.

- 1. To this man Jonah, living sometime; somewhere, God spoke.
- 2. To this man [Jonah] God made known His will and holy purpose.

II. God is still speaking [to men today]: and stirs men up.

A. There is not a single soul listening to me at this moment but what at sometime in your life there has come a definite and sure word from God.

- 1. You have felt the impress of His spirit upon your own spirit.
- 2. You have felt the touch of His hand on yours.



3. You have seen His finger pointing to the road in which you ought to walk and to the task that He was calling you to perform.

B. How this word came to Jonah we do not know, nor do we need to know.

1. It may have come to him through the consciousness of another's need.
2. It may have come to him through a study of the Word.
3. It may have come to him through the call of a friend.
4. How it came is not the essential thing [but]

C. The one thing essential and fundamental [here] is this that the Word did come.

1. That is the essential thing in your case and mine [for] God does speak to us.
2. God does move upon us, call us, and command us.
3. God does stir us up.
4. "The Word of the LORD came unto Jonah", and it comes this very moment to you and to me.

III. God gave Jonah a strange and unwelcome command. What was it that the LORD said to Jonah? He said, "Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city and cry against it, for its wickedness has come before me."

A. It was hard for Jonah to believe that he had heard right.

1. Was it possible that Nineveh was a great city in spite of the fact that it was a heathen city?
2. Was it possible that Nineveh grieved God because of its wickedness?

3. Could it be possible that God really loved Nineveh though it was outside the covenant?
- B. Jonah did not want to believe this, but he had to believe it.
- C. He had to realize that "The love of God is wider than the measure of man's mind and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind."
- D. Jonah did not want to undertake this mission.
  1. His objection did not grow out of the fear that Nineveh would refuse to repent.
    - a. His reluctance was not born of the conviction that there was nothing in the people of Nineveh to which his message would appeal.
      - (i) We are often hampered by that conviction I know.
      - (ii) We feel that it is absolutely useless to preach to some folks.
      - (iii) There is no use in trying to Christianize Africa or even our next door neighbor.
    - b. We so often forget that there is in every man an insatiable hunger and an unquenchable thirst that none but God can satisfy.
- E. But to Jonah this call was unwelcome because he feared that Nineveh might repent.
  1. Jonah did not want Nineveh to repent.
  2. Jonah believed that God was the God of Israel only.
    - a. He believed that God blessed Israel in two ways.
      - (i) He blessed her by giving her gifts spiritual and temporal.

(ii) He blessed her, in the second place, by sending calamities upon her enemies.

a'. An abundant harvest in Israel was a blessing from the LORD.

b'. A famine in Nineveh was also a blessing from the LORD.

3. Jonah was firmly convinced that the prosperity of a nation other than his own meant calamity to Israel.

a. It is a pity that this selfish belief did not perish with Jonah.

b. But when we face the facts we know that it did not.

c. It is a very human trait in us to feel that another's advancement is in some way a blow to ourselves.

d. It is equally a human trait to feel that another's downfall and disgrace is some way adding a bit of luster to our own crowns.

(i) Nothing could be more utterly false, but in spite of this fact

(ii) we cling to that faith through all the passing centuries.

F. On the whole this duty, then, that God had put upon Jonah was so distasteful that he made up his mind that whatever it might cost him, he would not obey.

1. Therefore, we read that he "rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."

2. Ordered to Nineveh, he set out to Tarshish.

G. There were only two cities on Jonah's map.

1. There was Nineveh, the city to which he might go, in the fellowship of God and within the circle of the will of God.
2. There was Tarshish, the city that lay at the end of the rebel's road, the city whose streets, if ever he walked them at all, he would walk without the fellowship of the God whom he had disobeyed.

H. Application

And there are just two cities on your map.

1. The Nineveh of obedience, and
2. The Tarshish of disobedience.
3. You are going to Nineveh or to Tarshish.

I. I do not claim to know where your Nineveh is . . . but wherever it is, if you walk its streets, you will walk them in the joy of the divine fellowship.

J. Tarshish is the city of "Have-Your-Own-Way" and "Do-As-You-Please" or "Take-It-Easy".

1. It is a city with no garden called Gethsemane and
2. A city without a rugged hill called Calvary.
3. It is a city without a cross.

K. Yet it is a city without joy and one where people seldom sing and often sob.

1. It is a city where nobody looks joyously into God's face and calls Him Father.
2. I met Jonah on that wharf . . . he had a worn and hounded look about him.

3. What I am trying to do is get away from God. ". . . and Jonah arose to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."

L. Why did not the text say "and Jonah arose to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of his duty" instead of "from the presence of the LORD"?

1. The writer of this story had real spiritual insight.
2. He knew that to flee from duty was to flee from God.

IV. Whenever you make up your mind to refuse to go where God wants you to go and to do what God wants you to do, you must make up your mind at the same time to renounce the friendship of God.

A. You cannot walk with God and at the same time be in rebellion against Him.

1. God cannot enter into fellowship with the soul that is disobedient.
2. It is mere mockery to say Lord, Lord, and refuse to do what He commands of you.

B. A man who has made up his mind to do wrong is far more at rest than the man whose mind is not made up at all.

1. When Jonah had fully decided to rebel against God, a deadly calm settled over him.
2. He went down inside the ship and went fast asleep.
3. The battle was over now, even though it had been lost; and he was able at last to sleep.

C. This period marks the period of greatest danger in the life of Jonah.

1. Jonah had been a rebel before but he was a restless rebel.

2. He had been disobedient before, but his disobedience had tortured him.
3. Now, however, he is not only without God, but he is content or even satisfied to be without Him.

D. No greater danger can come to any man than this.

1. As long as sin breaks your heart and your disobedience keeps you awake at night, there is hope for you.
2. But when you become content with your wickedness or when you come to believe it is the best for you, then you are in danger indeed.

E. Application

I am fully convinced that Jonah's danger is the danger of a great many, both in and out of the church.

1. Many of you kind and cultured people who have good will toward the church,
2. You love the church and desire its prosperity:
3. Yet many of you are doing nothing to make its desired prosperity a reality.

F. One of the most discouraging features about the Church today is the large number of utterly useless people within its fold.

1. They not only are useless but saddest of all, they are content with their uselessness.
2. They seem to feel that this is God's best for them.
3. This is all God expects or has a right to expect from them.

G. What does discipleship cost you?

1. What is involved in your allegiance to the Lord?

2. Church attendance twice a month or making a small contribution?

3. Only this and nothing more?

H. Do you not have real burdens?

1. The Sunday School is not your burden?

2. The prayer meeting is not your burden?

3. Visiting new members and welcoming new members of the church and kingdom?

4. Are you content to make your way up to the doors of the House of Many Mansions without having made one single costly sacrifice?

J. Do you know your duty?

1. Are you running away from your duty?

2. This is a needy world.

3. This is a needy church.

4. This church has an opportunity to touch the utmost parts of the earth if it is spiritually alive and spiritually mighty..

5. Are you making your contribution or do you consider involvement too much trouble?

6. If this is the case may the Lord wake us up this morning and give us to see our deadly danger.

### Conclusion

A. Jonah turned his back on his duty and his God.

1. He took a ship for Tarshish and went to sleep.

2. Surely his situation is critical indeed.

B. Even though he has forgotten God, God in His mercy has not forgotten Jonah.

1. God still loves Jonah, still longs for him, and still hopes for him.
2. And so in mercy God sends a storm after Jonah.
3. Jonah was a dangerous cargo: better gasoline or T.N.T. than a rebellious prophet.

C. It was in mercy that the ". . . LORD hurled a storm into the sea."

1. Let us thank God for the storms that rouse us, that wake us up and keep us from sleeping our way into the pit.
2. May the Lord send us any kind of a storm rather than allow us to fling ourselves eternally away from His presence.
3. I am so glad God will never allow man to go comfortably and peacefully to eternal death.
4. God never allows any man to be lost until He has done His best to save him.

V. Let us thank God for any losses that may come to us that will keep us from sleeping our way to ruin.

A. Jonah was down inside the boat asleep and meanwhile the tempest was raging.

1. The fear-filled crew was rubbing elbows with death.
2. Then Jonah was vigorously shaken awake by a heathen.
3. "What meanest thou, O Sleeper,"
  - a. When the situation is as it is, how is it that you are not on your knees?
  - b. Rise and call upon God.



B. We often need to also be shaken awake.

1. I wish through this message that I could shake some of you that are sleeping so soundly awake.
2. I wish that God might ask through me, "What meanest thou, O Sleeper?"
  - a. What do you mean by sitting idly and stupidly by in the House of God Sunday after Sunday and never doing anything?
  - b. Are you not even interested in the welfare of your own growing children and do you not gather them around the family altar?
  - c. How is it that amidst the tremendous issues of moral life and moral death that you can be as complacent and undisturbed as the dead?

C. That shake and that message got Jonah awake.

1. He sprang out of his berth and rushed upon the deck,
2. And the sight that met Jonah made a new man out of him.
  - a. It changed him from a provincial Jew into a world citizen and a missionary.
  - b. He saw they were one with himself in common danger and common need.
3. It changed him from a provincial Jew into a world citizen and missionary.
  - a. They were all threatened with death.
  - b. They all needed somebody to save them,
  - c. and that is still true.

4. We today differ in many respects, but we are all alike in this way: We have all sinned and we all need a Savior.

D. He saw not only that they were one in their needs but that they were one in their hopes.

1. He realized the oneness of the race.
2. He came to know that since we are one body, one member could not suffer without all members suffering.
3. He faced the fact that his own wicked rebellion against God had not only brought wretchedness upon himself, but that it was bringing it upon all that sailed with him.
4. No man ever flees from duty without incalculable hurt, not only to himself, but to others as well.

E. But God be thanked, the reverse is also true.

1. If my disobedience hurts, my obedience helps.
2. If my sin carries cursing, my righteousness brings a blessing.

#### ILLUSTRATION

- a. Paul is an example of obedience in a similar situation.
- b. His vessel was lashed by the tempest and he saved two hundred and seventy-six souls that were sailing with him.

- (i) "Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship."
- (ii) "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying 'Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar;

and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail  
with thee.'"

### Application

VI. How may the sea before us become calm?

A. Jonah does not offer an easy suggestion.

1. "Cast me overboard."
2. The man who formerly despised the heathen is now ready to die for them.
3. Jonah was made a new man by God.
4. He backslides a bit later but he comes out all right in the end.

B. God has no other method for stilling seas than that employed by Jonah.

1. When the tempest of this world's sin was to be stilled, there was no cheaper way than for Christ to allow Himself to be thrown overboard.
2. Livingstone followed the example of self-giving when he sacrificed himself to still the tempest of Africa.
3. That is the price we must all pay for real service.  
"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

### Conclusion

A. By losing his life, Jonah found it.

B. The application is for all of us.

1. If you will do this today, stop running from God and turn and walk with Him.

2. Then you will find that Nineveh is not a city of restlessness and wretchedness.
  - a. You will find that it is a city rich in fellowship with God.
  - b. With this fellowship comes the blessed experience of that peace that passeth all understanding.
- C. Which way are you going to travel from this hour?
  1. Out of that door you will go in a moment facing toward Nineveh or toward Tarshish.
  2. Which way will you face?
- D. May God grant that every step you take from this hour may be toward Nineveh.

### An Analysis

Clovis Chappell's "The Great Refusal: Jonah" begins in an arresting fashion. Immediately the author lays hold of his hearer in a graphic gripping flourish. In this sermon's introduction, outline, items 1 and 2 reflect adept and dramatic use of personification:

There is doubtless not another book in the literature of the world that has suffered more at the hands of men than the book of Jonah. It has been tortured by its enemies and wounded in the house of its friends.

Item B reflects poignant use of vivid contrast. "Thus, Jonah, coming to us as an evangelist, is mistaken by many for a clown." Also in Item C3 there is some indication of an implicit sense of the doctrine of the Gospel in the Old Testament when Chappell accurately states of the book of Jonah, "It is wonderful gospel in itself." Again he states in C1 and C2:

There is not another book in the Old Testament that is more fragrant with the breath of inspiration. There is not another book more radiant with the light of the divine love.

He also adds a statement that implies a view of Holy Scripture that indicates its inspiration is less than plenary and verbal: ". . . let us forget the rather queer casket in which this jewel comes while we examine the treasure" [Introduction D]. Again, in Roman numeral II Chappell sets forth implicit Gospel as he asserts the caring nature of God:

God is still speaking [to men] today and stirs men up. There is not a single soul listening to me at this moment but what at sometime in your life there has come a definite and sure word from God. You have felt the impress of His Spirit upon your spirit.

Alongside of Chappell's implied Gospel, he asserts explicit Law.

You have seen His [God's] finger pointing to the road in which you ought to walk and to the task that He was calling you to perform. . . . God does move upon us, call us, and command us. God does stir us up [IIA3, C2, 3, 4].

These are Law assertions. The implicit suggestion in the statements of section II is: Our God cares for every soul here under the sound of my voice. In His care for man He has spoken to every hearer for our God is a caring God. In His caring He both commands and stirs men up. Then, this is an implicit Gospel assertion coupled with explicit Law statements. God loves the hearer, God cares for him, on the one hand, but on the other hand one needs to take a look in the mirror and see his inadequacies. Here is what one ought to be and here is what one is. Note the discrepancies? The Law acts as a mirror to show man how he looks in the sight of God. The Law also is that doctrine in the Scriptures that teaches us how we are to be, and what we are to do and not to do. The Law shows man his sin and the wrath of God. The Law is to be preached to all men, but especially to impenitent sinners, for the Law and its

threats will terrify the hearts of the unrepentant and bring those who cease resisting to a knowledge of their sins to repentance. In this section Chappell points to the way his hearers ought to walk and the tasks they ought to undertake. These are the things that please God; therefore these are the things one needs to do. All are explicit Law statements. This sermon loses strength for the Law was explicitly asserted; but the Gospel was not. The Gospel was only weakly implied rather than boldly proclaimed.

Section III, A1, 2 and 3 all elevate the forgiving loving nature of God and hence are implied Gospel statements. Note IIIA3, B; "Could it be possible that God really loved Nineveh though it was outside the covenant? Jonah did not want to believe this, but he had to believe it." Chappell contended that God loved Nineveh even though it was outside the covenant [IIIA3]. Her sin still grieved God. All of this is Gospel language, however, the Gospel itself has not been explicitly proclaimed. Note Chappell's poetic assertions: "The love of God is wider than the measure of man's mind and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind" [IIIC]. This, again, is implicit Gospel language.

In IIID, Chappell states:

Jonah did not want to understand this mission. We too are often hampered . . . we feel it . . . useless to preach to some folks. There is no use in trying to Christianize Africa or even our next door neighbor.

In short, the hearer does not do what he ought. These are Law statements. This Law language is followed by implications of good news.

"We so often forget that there is in every man an insatiable hunger and unquenchable thirst that none but God can satisfy" [IIID1b]. This

being true, God's call was unwelcome to Jonah for Nineveh [his enemy] might repent [IIIE]. A famine in Nineveh was a blessing from God for in III, E, 3 we note in Jonah's view ". . . the prosperity of a nation other than his own meant calamity to Israel." This selfish belief did not perish with Jonah [IIIE3a].

It is a very human trait in us to feel that another's advancement is in some way a blow to ourselves. It is equally a human trait to feel that another's downfall and disgrace is in some way adding a bit of luster to our own crown [IIIE3c, d(ii)].

Man has clung to that belief through all the passing centuries.

[IIIE3d(ii)] Note Paradigm I question2. The above series of statements are of the character that produce the knowledge of sin. They condemn and threaten the hearer. They are Law statements. Chappell paints a picture of a Law intensifying command of God in IIIF and following.

On the whole this duty, then, that God had put upon Jonah was so distasteful that he made up his mind that whatever it might cost him, he would not obey. Therefore, we read that he 'rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord'. There was Tarshish, the city that lay at the end of the rebel's road . . . if ever he walked them [their streets] he walked [them] without the fellowship of the God whom he had disobeyed [IIIF, 1, G2].

Chappell's application: There are just two cities on the hearers map. He is going to Nineveh or to Tarshish. "Tarshish is the city of 'Have your own way' and Do as you please" or "Take it easy" [IIIJ]. It is a city without duty or joy. Chappell is clearly saying, that one ought not to go to Tarshish. This is a Law statement. That kind of conduct or lack of obedience does not please God: A Law Statement. One separates himself from God when he travels such a road of rebellion. This, too, is a threatening Law statement. God will not fellowship with one who takes the wrong route. This is terror and threat which is, again, strictly of the Law.

In IIID2, 3, Chappell paints a dramatic encounter. "I met Jonah on that wharf. . . . he had a warn hounded look about him [he was in despair or depression]. What I am trying to do is get away from God. Chappell raises a question. Why did the text not say ". . . and Jonah arose to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of his duty" rather than "from the presence of the LORD?" [IIIL]. The writer answers his inquiry. Chappell knew that to flee from duty was to flee from God [IIIL2]. In short, if one does not go and do what God desires of him, he rebels and renounces the friendship of God [IV]. This is threat, condemnation, and terror. It is a Law statement through and through. Again in IVA, Chappell asserts one cannot walk with God and at the same time be in rebellion against Him. These warnings and threatenings are Law statements. Citation IVA2 says, "It is mere mockery to say Lord, Lord, and refuse to do what He commands of you." This statement reverberates with condemnations, warnings, and threatenings. This is a Law statement. Jonah decided against obeying God and a great calm settled over him. There is an implication for the hearer here. If the hearer is not doing or being what God wants of him and he is calm or in repose, that hearer is in trouble. These words are those that bring terror, condemnation and warnings against the hearer. They are Law statements.

These statements also tend to provoke feelings of contrition and despair. These are clearly emotions that Law statements produce. In IVC, Chappell continues: "This period marks the period of greatest danger in the life of Jonah." Again in IVD3, he states, "No greater danger can come to any man than this." These statements underscore danger, threats and are continued Law utterances.



In IVD1, 2, Chappell continues:

As long as sin breaks your heart and your disobedience keeps you awake at night, there is hope for you. But when you become content with your wickedness or when you believe it is the best for you, then you are in danger indeed.

Threats, terror and condemnation saturate this section of Chappell's discourse. Again and again, Chappell dispenses death by the Law to his hearers. In IVE, 3; F, Chappell stated:

I am fully convinced that Jonah's danger is the danger of a great many, both in and out of the church. . . . Yet many of you are doing nothing to make its [the church's] desired prosperity a reality. One of the most discouraging features about the church today is the large number of utterly useless people within its fold.

These are demands, condemnations and threats of the Law. "They . . . are useless but saddest of all, they are content with their uselessness. They seem to feel that this is God's best for them" [IVF1, 2]. These words are couched in such a manner as to prick and condemn. These, then, are Law statements and condemnation is their purpose. In IVG, he continues in the same vein. "What does [your] discipleship cost you?" The question being raised here is "Is the reader doing enough?" It is interrogatory indictment. The reader is not doing enough, therefore, he is not doing right! [IVG1, 2, 3]. He continues to raise indicting questions about failure to have burdens for Sunday School, prayer meetings, visiting new members of the church and the kingdom. Has the reader no real care or burdens for the kingdom? These are rhetorical indictments framed to scourge and terrify. They are clearly Law statements. "Is the reader not running away from his duty?" [IVJ1]. "Does he not care?" Condemnation and indictment are the substance of this entire section. "This is a needy world. This is a needy church" [IVJ2,3]. Is the reader making his contribution or does he consider involvement too

much trouble? All of this is the dialogue of Law language calculated to cause guilt, to awaken the knowledge of sin, to terrorize, threaten and condemn the hearer.

Jonah turned his back on his duty and his God. . . . Even though he has forgotten God, God in His mercy has not forgotten Jonah. God still loves Jonah, still longs for him, and still hopes for him [IV Conclusion A, B, 1].

This is the language of implicit Gospel.

It was in mercy that ". . . the LORD hurled a storm into the sea." Let us thank God for the storms that rouse us, that wake us up and keep us from sleeping our way into the pit [IV Conclusion C, 1].

This storm analogy is Law language. God shakes you awake.

I am so glad God will never allow man to go comfortably and peacefully to eternal death. God never allows any man to be lost until He has done His best to save him [IV Conclusion C3, 4].

These are implicit Gospel statements. Chappell approaches the Gospel in VC4 "We today differ in many respects, but we are all alike in this way: We have all sinned and we all need a Savior." He correctly pinpointed the need but offered no explicit Gospel to meet that need. Chappell continues, "I wish through this message that I could shake some of you that are sleeping so soundly awake" [VB1]. This latter is again, simply the threat of the Law; as in B, 2, a, b, and c.

Chappell states in VC, 2: "That shake, and that message got Jonah awake. And the sight that met Jonah made a new man out of him" In reality, however, shocks and threats bring no real change. Only the Gospel has the power to completely change any man. Chappell then degenerates into winsome moralizing. "No man ever flees from duty without incalculable hurt, not only to himself, but to others as well" [VD4]. This is a Law statement telling the hearers what they ought to do and be. In VE2a, Paul is held up as an example for the hearer. Again the

Law says this is what one ought to do and be. Application VIA3 affirms that "Jonah was made a new man by God." This is implied Gospel. Chappell enunciates his Gospel for this sermon.

When the tempest of this world's sin was to be stilled, there was no cheaper way than for Christ to allow Himself to be thrown overboard. Livingstone followed the example of self-giving when he sacrificed himself to still the tempest of Africa. That is the price we must all pay for real service [Application VIB1-3].

Chappell momentarily hints that Christ was the sacrifice for our sins but rather than moving toward a Gospel-rich conclusion he again degenerates into moralizing words about an exemplary Christ. In VI Conclusion B, 1, Chappell momentarily flirts with a Gospel conclusion. "The application is for all of us. If you will do this today, stop running from God and turn and walk with Him." This is a Law statement. Do this! And an implied demand to repent! At this point the Good News of what God has done in Christ freely by His Grace should have come, but it does not. The Law is given weakly and the Gospel more weakly still. In his Conclusion Chappell urges his hearers to:

. . . stop running from God and turn and walk with Him. Then you will find that Nineveh is not a city of restlessness and wretchedness. You will find that it is a city rich in fellowship with God. With this fellowship comes the blessed experience of that peace that passeth all understanding [Conclusion B1, 2, a, b].

Chappell informs his hearers of the pleasant benefits of receiving the Gospel without once explicitly telling them the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection.

Rhetorical Paradigm I

Law Ascertaining Questions...

"The Great Refusal: Jonah"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes.

a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, you must lose your life.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes, godliness in this sermon is losing your life.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

Its content would be appropriate only for secure sinners.

Rhetorical Paradigm II

Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"The Great Refusal: Jonah"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place"?

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

Salvation here, is being "useful to God" where He wants you:  
the requirement is, "You must lose your life as Jesus did".

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Yes, you must first pour out your life in service to man and God.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel here.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

The Law predominates over the Gospel and this constitutes commingling the Law and Gospel.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No, it is not explicitly preached.

#### The Steadfast Face

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Luke 9:51

#### Introduction

Here is a picture of the face of Jesus without which our view of Him would not be complete.

A. The Evangelists gave varied views of our Master.

B. All these views are helpful in our understanding of Him.

C. Let us glance at a few of these pictures.

I. There are at least four faces depicted by the evangelists.

A. They show us the Christ of the sunny face.

1. We cannot read the gospels without realizing that Jesus was a man of deep and genuine joy.
2. His was the sunniest face that ever looked at the world.
3. This is indicated by the fact that out of His own experience He could give utterance to the Beatitudes:
  - a. "Oh, the joy of the poor in spirit . . . oh, the blessedness of the meek . . ." etc.
  - b. Only a heart full of song could give birth to such glad shouts as these.
4. There was another word that came from Jesus' mouth even in the face of adversity: "Be of good cheer"
  - a. We may be sure that the cheer that He commended to others, He possessed Himself.
  - b. He was too sincere for it to have been otherwise.
  - c. Otherwise His appeal would have counted for little.
  - d. His last prayer was contained in this request "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

B. The face of Jesus is also a vivid and vital face.

1. The impression that He made was that of a man who was tremendously alive.
2. Men constantly asked Him about life because they were sure that He knew the answer and that He knew it not theoretically but preactically.
3. Jesus was really living.

4. A young aristocrat was moved to overcome his inhibitions and ask ". . . what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"
5. When the offended listeners began to leave Jesus, He asked His disciples a question.
  - a. "Will ye also go away?"
  - b. Peter answered, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."
  - c. "We are eager to live, and we are sure that you have the secret of life."
  - d. The face of Jesus is a vital face.
- C. The Gospel also shows us the Christ of the tender face.
  1. This is the picture that gripped the hearts of men.
  2. His is a tenderness that drew to Him outcasts who dared not approach any other.
  3. He also drew little children who found His arms more inviting than the arms of their own mothers.
  4. It is this gentle and tender Christ that has laid the most compelling grip upon the great painters.
    - a. There is more to Jesus, however, than just loving tenderness.
    - b. There is rugged strength and courage.
- D. There is also the Christ of the steadfast face.
  1. "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."
  2. Here is a man who can make up his mind.
    - a. Even though confronted with deadly danger, he can reach a wholehearted decision.



- b. Jesus was courageous, then, and decisive.
- 3. Here is a face so majestic in its strength and purpose that it strikes a holy awe into the hearts of all who have eyes to see.
  - a. His garrulous disciples for once are hushed.
  - b. They are awed to silence.
- 4. There is no adequate picture of Jesus that fails to take into consideration this steadfast face.
- 5. He was continually a man of vast strength.
  - a. He stirred his nation as only strong men could stir it.
  - b. Even his enemies proclaim his strength by the intensity of their hatred of him.
  - c. We hate not weaklings but only strong men.
  - d. The Pharisees hated Jesus for turning their world upsidedown for he was strong and daring.
- II. Our text brings us face to face with this strength and courage in action.
  - A. Only a strong and a brave man would have done that under the circumstances.
    - 1. Jesus knew that at Jerusalem He would meet opposition from the bitterest of enemies.
    - 2. These foes would do anything in their power to destroy Him.
    - 3. What made all this harder to bear was the fact that these foes were the religious leaders of the day.
    - 4. It takes superlative strength to bear this kind of opposition.

5. [A person of character] never quits because of opposition even of the bitterest of foes.

B. In going to Jerusalem, not only did Jesus have to meet the opposition of His enemies, but also of His friends.

1. He had to disappoint and grieve those who loved Him best.
2. Facing His friends was more difficult than facing His foes:  
"You are a hindrance to me," he said.
3. Paul cried out in a similar situation: "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord."
4. But his friends made an already hard duty far harder.

C. Not only was it hard for Jesus to go to Jerusalem because of the opposition both of His enemies and of His friends, but because He knew that there He would have to face disaster.

1. He knew He would have to face the hard ordeal of the Cross.
2. Such an ordeal could not but be unspeakably terrible to a fine sensitive soul like Jesus.
  - a. As we rise in the scale of being, that rise is marked by an increased capacity for pain.
  - b. Jesus was supremely great. Therefore he had a supreme capacity for suffering.
  - c. How sublime, therefore, the heroism that enabled Him to go to Jerusalem to endure the Cross.

III. Why did Jesus voluntarily make this unwelcome journey? "No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself."

A. Jesus chose to go to the cross because he thought it to be the will of God for His life.

1. Jesus emphasized over and over again that He had one supreme purpose in life.

2. His one supreme purpose was to do the will of God.

3. "My meat is to do the will of God and to finish His work . . . I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

a. There were times when he was perplexed as to what the will of God was as at Gethsemane.

b. It was hard for Him to believe that His Father willed that He should suffer the pangs of the cross.

c. There were times He was half-persuaded that He had misunderstood.

d. Therefore, he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me."

e. Even though perplexed at times to know the will of His Father, He was never in the slightest doubt as to the rightness of that will.

(i) He was not in the slightest degree unwilling to perform God's will.

(ii) He was sure that His wise and loving Friend could only will what was best.

(iii) He, therefore, always kept this yearning uppermost in His heart, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

f. Hence, Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem because He believed that in no other way could He be obedient to the will of God.

B. He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem because He loved Jerusalem.

1. He loved Jerusalem and He loves you and me.
2. This city who had rejected Jesus still had a secure place in His heart.
3. He had great dreams for Jerusalem that he refused to surrender. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"
4. Though refused by them, He could not take their refusal as final.
5. His love would not allow Him to do less than His patient and persistent best.

C. Jesus, then also, set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem because He did not believe that His immediately seeming defeat would be the final word.

1. He was sure of His impending death but He was equally sure He was not going to Jerusalem as victim but as a conqueror.
2. He was sure that "lifted up from the earth He would draw all men to Himself."
3. By accepting that cross Jesus had remade and is still remaking the world.

- a. It is Christ Crucified that has been the supreme magnet of mankind through the centuries.
  - b. He is so still.
- 4. Therefore, we thank God that Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.
  - a. But what has all of this to do with you and me?
  - b. We are separated from that scene by centuries.
- D. The fact that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the long ago ought to hearten and strengthen us to go to our Jerusalem.
  - 1. Jerusalem is more than a spot on the map; it is a matter of doing God's will.
  - 2. We go to Jerusalem when we accept God's plan and purpose for our lives.
  - 3. It is this loyalty to the will of God that is the very sum total of Christianity.
  - 4. We can do nothing less than this and be Christian.
  - 5. We can do nothing greater through all eternity!

### Conclusion

- A. It is not easy to take such a course.
  - 1. But as Jesus steadfastly set His face, so we must set ours.
    - a. Christianity is not a religion that caters to our weakness and cowardice.
    - b. It is a religion for heroes.
    - c. Paul's life declares that there is nothing that demands a finer courage than to be a genuine disciple of Jesus.
  - 2. It takes courage to begin; it demands courage and strength for every step of the journey.

- a. For this reason many of us fail.
- b. Lacking courage for such high adventure, some take a half-way course.
- c. Others are too timid to make a wholehearted beginning.
- d. Thus they miss the deepest and sweetest secret of human blessedness.

B. While Charles G. Finney was preaching in Rochester, New York, a brilliant able lawyer who was chief justice of the Supreme Court left his balcony seat, walked upon the pulpit area and said, "If you will call for decisions for Christ now, I am ready to come."

- 1. By that courageous decision he not only found Christ for himself, but was the means of helping to bring a new spiritual springtime to his entire city.
- 2. God grant this day that you and I might renew our vows and again steadfastly set our faces to go to Jerusalem.

An Analysis: Luke 9:51

Chappell begins his discourse with the affirmation of Jesus having a sunny face or being a man of Joy [IA, 1]. Chappell states:

This is indicated by the fact that out of His own experience He could give utterance to the Beatitudes: . . . Only a heart full of song could give birth to such glad shouts as these [IA3, b].

The suggestion here seems to be that these utterances were Gospel utterances. "Oh, the joy of the poor in spirit. . . oh, the blessedness of the meek. . . . Only a heart full of song could give birth to such glad shouts as these" [IA3a, b]. In reality all of these are Law statements. This is the kind of conduct God requires of believers.

One must be poor in spirit, one ought to mourn, one is required to be meek, it is one's duty to be merciful, and so forth.

This introduction clearly reminds the hearer: I have much demanded of me. It lifts the knowledge of sin, terrorizes, threatens and condemns. It is not Good News, it is not joyful. Jesus is joyful, but this message is not. It is Law and not Gospel in the narrow sense. Chappell approaches Gospel language, however, when in IC, 1, 2, 3, and 4 he states:

The Gospel also shows us the Christ of the tender face. This is the picture that gripped the hearts of men. His is a tenderness that drew to Him outcasts who dared not approach any other. He also drew little children who found His arms more inviting than the arms of their own mothers. It is this gentle and tender Christ that has laid the most compelling grip upon the great painters.

This is all implicit Gospel language. Chappell declares:

There is more to Jesus, however, than just loving tenderness. There is rugged strength and courage. There is also the Christ of the steadfast face. 'He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.' Here is a man who can make up his mind. Even though confronted with deadly danger, he can reach a wholehearted decision. . . . There is no adequate picture of Jesus that fails to take into consideration this steadfast face [IC4a-D2a, 4].

He continued:

The Pharisees hated Jesus for turning their world upside-down for he was strong and daring. . . . Jesus knew that at Jerusalem He would meet opposition from the bitterest of enemies. . . . It takes superlative strength to bear this kind of opposition. . . . [A person of character] never quits because of opposition even of the bitterest of foes. In going to Jerusalem, not only did Jesus have to meet the opposition of His enemies, but also of His friends. . . . Facing His friends was more difficult than facing His foes: "You are a hindrance to me," he said. . . . He knew He would have to face the hard ordeal of the Cross. . . . As we rise in the scale of being, that rise is marked by an increased capacity for pain. Jesus was supremely great. Therefore he had a supreme capacity for suffering [IDd, IIA1, 4, 5, B, 2, C1, 2a, b].

Chappell asserts:

Jesus chose to go to the cross because he thought it to be the will of God for His life. Jesus emphasized over and over again that He

had one supreme purpose in life. . . . 'My meat is to do the will of God and to finish His work . . . I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.' . . . Even though perplexed at times to know the will of His Father, He was never in the slightest doubt as to the rightness of that will. He was not in the slightest degree unwilling to perform God's will. . . . 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' Hence, Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem because He believed that in no other way could He be obedient to the will of God. . . . His love would not allow Him to do less than His patient and persistent best. . . . By accepting that cross Jesus had remade and is still remaking the world [IIIA, 1, 3, e, (i), (iii), f, B5, C3].

Chappell began his application by raising a question:

But what has all of this to do with you and me? . . . The fact that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the long ago ought to hearten and strengthen us to go to our Jerusalem. . . . We go to Jerusalem when we accept God's plan and purpose for our lives. It is this loyalty to the will of God that is the very sum total of Christianity. We can do nothing less than this and be Christian. We can do nothing greater through all eternity! [IIIC4a, D, 2-5].

From the beginning to the end of this section of the discourse this sermon is totally the implied terror of the Law. It awakens sin in the hearer and produces the threatenings and condemnation of the Law. It makes demand after demand and engenders contrition and despair.

There is more to Jesus than gentle tenderness, Chappell points out, and so should there be to the hearer, the Law implies. There is rugged strength and courage in the character of Jesus, and so should there be in the reader's character as well, infers the Law. Here is a strong courageous man who can make up his mind. Now God demands the same of those who hear or read this today, implies the Law. Jesus never hesitated to turn the sinner's world upside down in obeying God, and neither should the reader shrink from any of his responsibilities. Jesus courageously withstood opposition from friend and foe alike, likewise must the reader be courageous and unyielding. Jesus had superlative strength to bear up. The hearer should have like strength.



Jesus was supremely great, therefore, he had a supreme capacity for suffering. The reader, too, ought to be great and develop such a capacity for suffering. Jesus went to the cross because He thought it to be the will of God. Jesus was willing to pay the supreme price. The reader should be willing to do the same thing, says the Law. Jesus lived to do the will of God, states Chappell, and so should the reader, implies the Law. Jesus was not the slightest bit unwilling to perform God's will. Neither should the reader be unwilling to do God's will, asserts the Law. His [Jesus] love would not allow Him to do less than His patient and persistent best. Our love should be of the same caliber. By accepting the cross Jesus remade and is still remaking the world. This is purely a Law sermon. From the first line to the last it rains condemnation and threats. It produces the knowledge of sin and terrorizes the hearer with its implied demands. This sermon produces contrition and encourages despair. The Law in this discourse crushes and destroys.

Chappell continues by acknowledging that:

It is not easy to take such a course. But as Jesus steadfastly set His face, so we must set ours. Christianity is not a religion that caters to our weakness and cowardice. It is a religion for heroes. . . . It takes courage to begin; it demands courage and strength for every step of the journey. For this reason many of us fail. Lacking courage for such high adventure, some take a half-way course. Others are too timid to make a wholehearted beginning. Thus they miss the deepest and sweetest secret of human blessedness [Conclusion A-b, 2-d].

Again, Chappell pelts his hearers with the terror and condemnation of the Law. One should be as steadfast as Jesus was! Christianity is for heroes! One needs to stop being a coward! In fact, Chappell strongly suggests, one's own lack of wholeheartedness in everything he does for God is the very reason that he might miss the ". . . deepest and

sweetest secret of human blessedness" [Conclusion A2d]. The Law fairly shouts from Chappell's sermons "Measure up, you miserable sinner." This is terror of the Law. It is purely a Law sermon. Even his conclusion reeks of Law rather than Gospel. He recounts the story of a courageous "decision for Christ" among many witnesses that sparked a revival that saved a town and adds, "By that courageous decision he not only found Christ for himself, but was the means of helping to bring a new spiritual springtime to his entire city" [Conclusion B1]. The implication is, if you had courage you would do the same thing right now. This is the threat of the Law. His conclusion ends, "God grant this day that you and I might renew our vows and again steadfastly set our faces to go to Jerusalem" [Conclusion B2]. Even in his last line there is only Law. The reader needs [ought] to renew his vows so that he can do right. This is clearly a demand of the Law.

### Rhetorical Paradigm I

#### Law Ascertaining Questions

"The Steadfast Face"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes.

a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, be a hero.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes, be strong and not weak and you will become godly.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

By content it would be directed to secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"The Steadfast Face"

1. Is this a message of Joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

To be a Christian, one is to be courageous like Jesus, and salvation is to arrive at your personal Jerusalem.

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Yes, you must be a hero like Paul and Jesus.

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

The Gospel is not preached here.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

The Law predominates, and this constitutes a commingling of the Law and Gospel.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No, on the contrary, they are emphasized.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No, on the contrary, the Law is predominant.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No.

The Cynic's New Year  
(New Year's Day)

"There is no new thing under the Sun." Ecclesiastes 1:9

Introduction

Here is a man for whom life has obviously grown stale: He has allowed himself to become a cynic.

A. He has suffered heavy and tragic losses.

1. Among these is the loss of New Year's Day.
2. January 1 still came every twelve months.
3. But it held no expectancy.
4. It never meant a resurrection of hope or revival of courageous efforts to attain the heights.

B. The new year, for him, was only the beginning of another year of boredom, and yawns, of disgust and despair, of wearily trudging through a monotonous waste of desert sand.

C. He calls himself a preacher and even takes a text.

1. He does not select a warm God-filled text of expectation and bracing assurance.
2. On the contrary his text is about as sunny as a sob: a text filled with despair and hopelessness.
3. "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity": No wonder that for him there is no new thing under the sun.

I. How has he become a cynic?

A. His is not a cynicism born merely of ignorance and inexperience.

1. He is no youthful college student trying to impress his elders with his superiority.
2. Nor is he trying to shock us with his bold and daring wickedness.
3. He is not parading borrowed garments of cynicism.

B. He is not a cynic because he is passing through a temporary fit of the blues.

1. The best and the strongest men sometimes lost heart:
  - a. Elijah did.
  - b. In prison, so did John the Baptist.

(i) There John began to wonder seriously if his whole ministry as forerunner of the Messiah had been no more than a tragic mistake.

(ii) Often we utter sentiments in our hours of depression of which we are heartily ashamed when we come to more normal days of sunshine and hope.

2. But the cynicism of this preacher is far more than a passing fit of depression.

C. He is, also, not cynical only through some great disappointment as, for example, was Dean Swift.

1. He struck back at men over his own disappointment through his biting sarcasm.
2. "His laughter jars upon us," says Thackeray, "after seven score years."

3. Disappointment of this nature did not seem to be the problem of this cynic for he had realized all of his ambitions, it appears.

D. Some become cynics because of physical suffering and torture's unspeakable anguish.

1. Even Job after much tenacity at first lost his grip at this point.
2. Many a man on the rack has confessed to that of which he was not guilty.
3. But this cynic, so far as we know, was in perfect health, and had not been the victim of any physical suffering.
4. Rather, he is that type of cynic that has the least excuse for existing, for life has dealt bountifully with him.

E. He rather tells us that his cynicism is not one of the head but one of the heart.

1. His trouble is that he has no faith in God.
2. Being without God, he naturally also is without hope.

II. What are some of the things that he has found to be vanity?

A. The physical universe is vanity.

1. Other men have looked upon it and been made to wonder and worship.
2. The Psalmist did.
3. So did modern songwriters and poets as Addison and Browning.
4. But the cynic saw nothing beautiful or exciting.
5. He could not look at earth or sky without stifling a yawn.
6. "I see no beauty here at all," he says.

B. Pleasure is vanity for he had flung himself into that enterprise with abandon.

1. There was no pleasure from which he held his hand.
2. But he came back from all his quests spitting the ashes of his burnt out hopes from his lips and saying, "Vanity, of vanities."
3. There is no new thing under the sun, he added.
4. It is a pity that every votary of pleasure in this amusement mad day would not read and take to heart at least this much of his confession.

C. Achievement is vanity too, he says.

1. He became a builder of palaces, and beautiful cities.
2. He changed landscapes into gardens and deserts into gardens.
3. He also amassed a vast fortune and acquired a retinue of slaves.
4. But when he had completed all the enterprises to which he turned his hand again, he muttered in disgust, "Vanity of Vanity, all is vanity."

D. Wisdom, too, he considered vanity.

1. Wisdom means not only the power to know, but to put knowledge into effect.
2. Wisdom is the power to be.
3. To gain wisdom is to gain virtue.
4. But since goodness met no reward, he decided this too was vanity.

E. Man is also vanity.



1. Man is vanity because mankind is almost universally bad:  
the cynic knew no good people.
  - a. There might be one good man in a thousand.
  - b. But there did not exist a good woman.
2. Mankind is not only universally bad, but it is doomed to stay that way.
  - a. To my mind this is by far the most cynical, the most utterly hopeless thing that he says.
  - b. The Bible teaches with equal emphasis that man may be saved from sin.
  - c. The Bible does teach that men are lost, but it teaches with equal certainty that they are capable of being saved.
3. The cynic lived in a drab world of despair where the sinner has no possible chance of ever becoming a saint; where the prodigal can never leave the swine pen and find his penitent way back to his father's house.
  - a. The cynic sees man not as personality but as a machine.
  - b. He knows not a God of love, but a god of blind fate.
    - (i) "There is a time for everything under the sun."
    - (ii) He means to say man has no power of volition.
    - (iii) Man simply responds to certain stimuli without any freedom of choice whatsoever.
    - (iv) The cynic, you see, is a behaviorist.
    - (v) He is a profound believer in the New Psychology:  
"We are but helpless pieces of the game he  
(fate) plays."

(vi) Therefore, naturally he concludes that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

III. Now what was the practical effect of this lack of faith on the preacher's life: That is, what did his cynicism do to him?

A. It killed his sense of obligation.

1. He had scholarship and vast ability, but he felt wisdom was vanity and he had no responsibility to be of service to others.
2. He was vastly clever, but being without any sense of responsibility, he was, therefore, morally an infant.
3. He was an intellectual giant, but he was also a spiritual dwarf.
4. In secondary matters he was keen: in matters of supreme importance he was little better than an idiot.

B. His lack of faith paralyzed all effort to help heal the world's open sore.

1. What others suffered was none of his business in the first place.
2. How futile to undertake to make the world better when he knows that what is wrong can never be made right and what is crooked can never be made straight.

C. His cynicism made him wretched.

1. It took all the bloom and beauty out of life.
2. The man to be congratulated was the one who was dead.
3. In spite of all his efforts at pleasure it was all vain, even laughter itself.

4. "I hate life: get drunk and forget about it" was his conclusion here.

IV. But this cynic seems to have come to a discovery of God.

A. Through this discovery his whole attitude toward life was changed and all things became new.

1. Through his discovery of God he came to possess a new sense of duty.

2. He came to say, "I ought" and "I owe."

3. He closes his book with one of the most majestic sentences in the Bible.

a. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

b. To discover God is ever to discover duty.

(i) The jailer did not notice the bleeding backs of Paul and Silas till he had found Christ.

(ii) But having found Christ, he took water the same hour of the night and washed their stripes.

c. Through discovery of God he came to a new sense of his personal responsibility.

B. In his new sense of personal responsibility, he made new discoveries about men.

1. Man is ever a creature of obligations.

a. He will be judged according to the way in which he discharges those obligations.

b. He now was forced to change his beliefs.

2. The former cynic no longer could believe that the wise man and the fool met a common fate.

a. He now believed the opposite.

b. Therefore, he could warn emphatically, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let the heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

C. Finally, in the realization of all that he had suffered and of all that he had missed, he shows us how to avoid a like tragic folly.

1. How magnificently he puts it! "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

a. Surely this onetime cynic is here speaking out of his own experience.

b. He has lived through these pleasureless years against which he is now warning us.

c. To him evil days have come, days that were dull and gray, drab and old.

(i) He has watched the sweet flower of life wither and rain its dusty petals upon the ground.

(ii) "But it need not be so with you," he tells us.

2. "Rejoice thou, O young man in the days of thy youth, and your sun will ever hang in a morning sky, and life for you will keep its winsome newness from daylight until dark."
3. But if it so happens that we are no longer young and we have wasted our years?
  - a. He does not insult our intelligence by telling us that our wasted years do not matter.
  - b. Yet he does not leave us hopeless.
4. Instead of lamenting with the cynic that there is no new thing under the sun, we shall shout with Saint Paul, "Old things are passed away; behold they are become new."

An Analysis: Ecclesiastes 1:9

Chappell begins "The Cynic's New Year" with a statement of gripping candor. "Here is a man for whom life has obviously grown stale: He has allowed himself to become a cynic" [Introduction]. Chappell vividly describes a man devastated by the Law and reeling in despair. From this point forward Chappell adds line upon line of Law to his hearer until he too is leveled by the Law. "How has he become a cynic?" [I] Chappell asks, and then with piercing inference he begins to teach his hearers the paths to cynicism that they should avoid. Statement after statement cries, Don't do this: do that! Don't be this: be that! Chappell asserts of his cynic: "His is not a cynicism born merely of ignorance and inexperience. He is no youthful college student trying to impress his elders with his superiority" [[IA, 1]. Nor should the reader do likewise, cries the Law. "Nor is he trying to shock us with his bold and daring wickedness. . . . [nor] parading borrowed garments

of cynicism" [IA2, 3]. Neither should the reader do any of these childish things, the implicit Law warns. In IB, Chappell's pastoral spirit is in evidence as he first convicts and then comforts his flock. "He is not a cynic because he is passing through a temporary fit of the blues. The best and strongest men sometimes lose heart. Elijah did. [and] . . . so did John the Baptist" [IB, 1, a, b]. Neither, he infers, should the reader get down on himself. A fit of depression should not cause one to think oneself altogether cynical.

"He is, also, not cynical only through some great disappointment as, for example, was Dean Swift" [IC]. Nor is his cynicism a result of ". . . physical suffering and torture's unspeakable anguish [for he apparently was] . . . in perfect health, and had not been the victim of any physical suffering" [ID, 3].

He rather tells us that his cynicism is not one of the head but one of the heart. His trouble is that he has no faith in God. Being without God, he naturally is without hope [IE, 1-2].

Disbelief is death, Chappell declares implicitly. If the hearer is in unbelief, he is without God, his implicit Law shouts. Therefore, why does the hearer not make himself believe! This is the condemnation of the Law that leads to despair. He holds that the cynic was in unbelief and without God, therefore, without hope. Hence, the reader's unbelief leaves him without God and hopeless. Again this is a threat of the Law which brings despair.

The cynic looked at the earth, full of wonder and beauty for some but said, "I see no beauty here at all" [IIA6]. Also, he concluded that all pleasure was vanity. Chappell adds, "It is a pity that every votary of pleasure in this amusement-mad day would not read and take to heart at least this much of his confession" [IIB4]. Of course, this

is the accusing voice of the Law. After the cynic declares achievement, wisdom and man himself to be vain, Chappell adds an evaluative observation.

. . . the cynic knew no good people. There might be one good man in a thousand. But there did not exist a good woman. Mankind is not only universally bad, but is doomed to stay that way [IIE1-2].

Chappell, then makes an attempt to say something comforting: "To my mind this is by far the most cynical, the most utterly hopeless thing that he [the cynic] says. The Bible teaches with equal emphasis that man may be saved from sin" [IIEa]. This is an implicit Gospel inference but it is not followed up with an explicit proclamation of the Gospel. Chappell merely drops the matter after a second similar assertion: "The Bible does teach that men are lost, but it teaches with equal certainty that they are capable of being saved" [IIEb]. This, Chappell asserts, without the slightest indication of what God has done in Christ. There is no message of the saving grace of a loving God.

The cynic, [Chappell concludes] lived in a drab world of despair where the sinner has no possible chance of ever becoming a saint; . . . [For] He knows not a God of love, but a God of blind fate [IIE3, b].

A world of Law without Gospel is a drab world indeed.

Clovis Chappell then offered an analysis. What is the practical effect of cynicism on mankind? What did his cynicism do to him?

It killed his sense of obligation. He had scholarship and vast ability, but he felt wisdom was vanity and he had no responsibility to be of service to others . . . he was, therefore, morally an infant. . . . His lack of faith paralyzed all effort to help heal the world's open sore. His cynicism made him wretched. It took all the bloom and beauty out of life [IIIA, 1-2, B C. 1].

This section of Chappell's discourse implicitly cries out: Do not be a cynic. Be responsible. One must serve others. One must have faith. One must heal the world's open sore. The implicit demand produces the

knowledge of sin, terrorizes, condemns, and threatens the hearer. The hearer must change if he is going to enjoy any hope from God. This sermon encourages contrition and despair. It is completely an exercise in the doctrine of the Law. Section IIIC states, "His cynicism made him wretched." This is an implied Law statement that the reader's unbelief will also make him wretched. This is the pure language of the Law.

In Item IV and following, Chappell makes a Gospel-like assertion:

But this cynic seems to have come to a discovery of God. Through this discovery his whole attitude toward life was changed and all things became new. Through his discovery of God he came to possess a new sense of duty. He came to say, 'I ought' and 'I owe'. . . . To discover God is ever to discover duty. . . . Through discovery of God he came to a new sense of his personal responsibility [IV, A, 1-2, 3c].

What Chappell's projections really indicate is this: His cynic felt the blows of the Law and had his sense of obligation stirred. He read the Law and the dulled script on his unconverted heart became clear. If, indeed, Chappell had a clear understanding of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, he would have understood the difference between a dutiful response to the Law preached and the joyful response of the penitent sinner who has been saved by the Grace of God through faith. Chappell's cynic no longer is a cynic. He has become one who now dutifully attempts to keep the Law [IVB2]. Chappell recommended through the lips of his cynic the Law admonition to contemporary youth.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" [IVC1]. Chappell says, in effect, "Keep the Law." Here is what one ought to do and be: This Law is the Gospel, according to Chappell. After the final echoes of a sermon that is little but Law,



Chappell offers one last line of weak and implicit Gospel: "Instead of lamenting with the cynic . . . [let us shout] with Saint Paul, 'Old things are passed away behold all things are become new'" [IVC4].

Rhetorical Paradigm I

Law Ascertaining Questions

"The Cynic's New Year"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes.

a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Keep the Law is the implicit condition.

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

Its focus should be secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

##### "The Cynic's New Year"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

Since the Gospel is not preached here, the hearer must rely on keeping the Law.

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

The implicit condition is, "Keep the Law".

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

No Gospel is preached.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

No.

11. Is the article of justification by faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

These are not addressed.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.

17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

No, there is no explicit Gospel whatever.

#### Poverty That Makes Rich

"Blessed are the poor in spirit:

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3

#### Introduction

As Jesus speaks to this multitude He is speaking to a miniature world.

A. It is made up of all kinds and conditions of men.

1. The inner circle is made up of His special friends.

2. Beyond them stretch acres of human faces.

B. It is a cross-section of humanity.

1. There are the successful and the failures.
2. There are those who have conquered and those who have been defeated.
3. There are the rich and the poor.
4. There are the literate and the illiterate.
5. They are, doubtless, of varied races and varied religious creeds.

C. As He looks into their faces, as He looks beyond their faces into their hearts, He sees that they are all out of the same quest.

1. "Every heart here," He says to Himself, "is in search of happiness."
2. But most of them have missed the way.
3. "Therefore, I can do nothing better than point out the way that they have missed."
4. Therefore He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

D. The audience that Jesus faced in that long ago is very close akin to the audience He would face were He to come to our city this morning.

1. The heart of humanity remains unchanged through the years.
2. Jesus would look upon us in the same compassion today as He did then as "Sheep without a shepherd."
3. He would only find a few who had laid hold on the open secret that is so often hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes.

4. He would tell us that the roadway to happiness is the same today that it was nineteen centuries ago.
  5. He would have no better direction to give them than that given in our text.
- E. Jesus can speak with authority about happiness because it was His constant possession.
1. In spite of the fact He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, His was the gladdest heart that ever beat in a human bosom.
  2. And those who share His poverty of spirit share His happiness.
    - a. Sorrow may come but it is only temporary.
    - b. "Joy cometh with the morning." It's happiness that abides.
    - c. It is sorrow and sighing that flee away.
- I. Who are the blessed folk who find real happiness?
- A. Happiness is not born of any outward condition or circumstance.
1. This is a surface truth yet it seems every man must learn it for himself.
  2. Happiness is not born of accomplishment, success or of possession or applause.
  3. Nor is happiness born of what we fail to have.
- B. Happiness is not born of what we fail to have.
1. Poverty in itself is not a blessing.
  2. Poverty does, however, give one a sense of need and hence become more readily a roadway to happiness.
    - a. Riches may do the opposite.

- b. Riches tend to give a false independence.
- 3. But no man's necessarily blessed simply because he is poor.
- 4. It also holds that no man is necessarily unblessed simply because he is rich.
  - a. Dives, the rich man, blundered out into darkness.
  - b. Lazarus found a place in Abraham's bosom.
  - c. Dives was not condemned because he was rich, any more than Lazarus was saved because he was poor.
  - d. One may be just as poor as Lazarus and yet be greedy and grasping and wretched, while another may be as rich as Dives and yet be truly blessed.
- C. Happiness depends not upon what we have, nor upon what we do, but upon what we are.
  - 1. If we seek happiness on the outside, we shall miss it forever.
  - 2. Happiness, if it ever comes, must come from within.
    - a. It does not depend upon the kind of house in which we live;
    - b. It depends upon the kind of man that lives in the house.
  - 3. The kind of man that is happy, said Jesus, is the man that is poor in spirit.
    - a. This man who is poor in spirit arrives.
    - b. It is he alone that arrives.
    - c. It sounds absurd and unbelievable.
    - d. Millions today are just as far from believing this statement as the audience to which Jesus first spoke it.

D. Now while we have doubts about the poor in spirit being blessed, you may be sure that the proud in spirit are unblessed.

1. We agreed. Wretched are the poor in spirit.
2. Did you ever see anyone afflicted with proud flesh?
3. There is only one thing that is more sensitive and that is a proud spirit.
  - a. You may be proud of your pride, but of this you may be sure -- it is a certain road to wretchedness.
  - b. Miserable are the proud in spirit.
  - c. Happy are the poor in spirit.

II. What does Jesus mean by poverty of spirit?

A. There is often a lack of enthusiasm for the "poverty of spirit concept" stemming from our misunderstanding of it.

1. Poverty of spirit does not mean the following:
  - a. Self-contempt or self-despising;
  - b. It does not mean crawling or groveling.
2. Instead poverty of spirit is a positive virtue.

B. To be poor in spirit means to be humble, childlike, teachable, or ready to lean upon a higher power.

1. To truly understand poverty of spirit it is necessary to see it become incarnate in a personality.
2. Otherwise, it tends to remain a mere abstraction.
  - a. The same thing is true of the virtue "love."
  - b. I asked a group of children if they could define love and they could not.
  - c. I asked them if they had ever seen love and every child in the class raised his hand.

(i) They had seen love incarnate.

(ii) They had seen it in their mother.

C. Where can we find poverty of spirit incarnate?

1. Not in the ten spies who went in to spy out Canaan:

rather their cowering only showed them to be poor spirited.

2. It is a similar situation with the one talent man who was intimidated by the men of more talents and slunk out and buried his in a napkin.

a. He had a problem, a low self-concept.

b. He was also full of pride and cowardice.

3. Where can we go to find poverty of spirit incarnate?

D. These beatitudes are all descriptions of the character of our Lord.

1. It is to him, therefore, that we go to find out who in the deepest and fullest sense was poor in spirit.

2. He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing".

3. He was so poor he washed his disciples feet; fishermen and tax gatherers and the like.

a. This task was beneath the disciples.

b. I might have even attempted to dissuade him of it.

c. Simon would probably have been too proud to do it.

d. But what none other would do, Jesus did.

4. Why would Jesus wash feet?

a. Because He had no respect for Himself? No, of course not.

b. "Knowing that He was come from God and went to God."



c. When He was conscious of His divine origin, when He was conscious that He was going to sit down at the right hand of His Father to receive a name that is above every name, then He girt Himself with the towel.

5. Here is true poverty of spirit and here also is manhood at its best.

III. Why is it that poverty of spirit leads to happiness?

A. It is through poverty of spirit that we come into possession of the kingdom of God.

1. Such enter naturally, and the door is closed to all others.

a. There is nothing arbitrary here.

b. For the kingdom is not given as a reward.

2. Jesus illustrated this by placing a child on his lap; for child-likeness is none other than humility or poverty of spirit.

a. This child likeness is essential.

b. Without it you cannot enter the Kingdom. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

3. In the parable of the prodigal son the elder brother lacked this child-like spirit.

a. He felt he had not sinned and was perfectly upright.

b. The younger son confessed: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

c. The doors of the feast opened automatically, because he was poor in spirit.

B. Then, it is only through poverty of spirit that we remain in the kingdom.

1. Pride certainly goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
2. Remember the frog who fell to his destruction because he could not resist opening his mouth to take credit.
3. Jesus said, "All of ye shall be offended because of me this night."
  - a. Peter's pride was offended and Jesus cried out.
  - b. But God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
  - c. These things God hates "a proud look. . . ." We do too.

C. Then, poverty of spirit leads to blessedness because it fits us to serve in the kingdom.

1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness."
2. It is the only way we can restore them.
3. If we go in the spirit of pride, in the spirit of self-sufficiency, we shall repel rather than restore.
  - a. A child made discord upon a piano in a hotel lobby.
  - b. A great pianist sat her upon his lap and "drowned her discord with his 'Marvelous Melody.'"
  - c. The girl's poverty of spirit submitted to his genius and great music resulted.

#### Conclusion

And so it may be with ourselves.

A. If in true humility we give first place to the Supreme Master.

1. He will surely touch our heart harp and change its blundering discord:

2. Into the exquisite music of abiding blessedness.

B. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

### An Analysis: Matt 5:3

Clovis Chappell begins his sermon from the beatitudes by immediately reaching out and laying claim to the attention of his hearers. His tool is his gift of keen insight into human nature and his ability to place each hearer quickly and gently in his rhetorically created drama.

As Jesus speaks to this multitude He is speaking to a miniature world. It is made up of all kinds and conditions of men. The inner circle is made up of His special friends. Beyond them stretch acres of human faces. It is a cross-section of humanity. There are the successful and the failures. There are those who have conquered and those who have been defeated. There are the rich and the poor. There are the literate and the illiterate. They are, doubtless, of varied races and various religious creeds. As He looks into their faces, as He looks beyond their faces into their hearts, He sees that they are all out of the same quest. 'Every heart here,' He says to Himself, 'is in search of happiness.' But most of them have missed the way. 'Therefore, I can do nothing better than point out the way that they have missed.' Therefore, He said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit:'. . . . [Introduction, A-C4].

Chappell continues his artistry:

The audience that Jesus faced in that long ago is very close akin to the audience he would face were He to come to our city this morning. The heart of humanity remains unchanged through the years. . . . He would have no better direction to give them than that given in our text [Introduction D, 1, 5].

The introduction has a Gospel aura about it in that it vividly depicts the fetching, winsome, nature of Jesus the Christ. The response

intended would be: Jesus really cared and He still does care: even for me. These are implicitly Gospel or joy creating responses.

Chappell begins the body of his discourse by identifying who the blessed ones are. He first states his case in negative terms.

Happiness is not born of any outward condition or circumstance. . . . Happiness is not born of accomplishment, success or of possession or applause. Nor is happiness born of what we fail to have. Poverty in itself is not a blessing. . . . It also holds that no man is necessarily unblessed simply because he is rich. Dives, the rich man, blundered out into darkness. Lazarus found a place in Abraham's bosom. Dives was not condemned because he was rich, any more than Lazarus was saved because he was poor. . . . Happiness depends not upon what we have, nor upon what we do, but upon what we are. . . . Happiness, if it ever comes, must come from within. . . . It depends upon the kind of man that lives in the house. The kind of man that is happy, said Jesus, is the man that is poor in spirit [IA, 2-3, B-1, 4, a-c, C, 2, b, 3].

In ID Chappell asserts, "Now while we have doubts about the poor in spirit being blessed, you may be sure that the proud in spirit are unblessed." The implication here is: It is not God-pleasing to have proud flesh. Therefore, do not be proud. This is a Law statement. Be this way, not that, is the command. This inference produces the knowledge of sin. It demands of the sinner, implicitly, to be more than he is. The same is true of statements ID3a-c. "You may be proud of your pride, but of this you may be sure -- it is a certain road to wretchedness" [ID3a]. For shame, the Law cries out: Just look at the sin. Surely this hearer is going to get what he deserves. Threatenings are entirely of the Law. The hearer that is haughty is miserable: he needs to change, implies the Law. "Happy are the poor in spirit" [ID3c] implies, be this way as well. Chappell states the case aptly: "To be poor in spirit means to be humble, childlike, teachable, or ready to lean upon a higher power" [IIB]. He continues:

To truly understand poverty of spirit it is necessary to see it become incarnate in a personality. Otherwise, it tends to be a mere abstraction. . . . Where can we go to find poverty of spirit incarnate? These beatitudes are all descriptions of the character of our Lord. It is to him, therefore, that we go to find out who in the deepest and fullest sense was poor in spirit. He said, 'I can of mine own self do nothing.' He was so poor he washed his disciples feet; fishermen and tax gatherers and the like. . . . What none other would do, Jesus did. . . . Here is true poverty of spirit and here also is manhood at its best [IIB1-2, C3, D, 1-3, d, 5].

The very concept of Jesus as exemplary manhood is implicit Law; Here is your example, do this! Be like Jesus, it demands. The Law alone makes such demands.

It is through poverty of spirit that we come into possession of the kingdom of God. Such enter naturally, and the door is closed to all others. . . . Jesus illustrated this by placing a child on his lap; for child-likeness is none other than humility or poverty of spirit. This childlikeness is essential. Without it you cannot enter the kingdom [IIIA, 1, 2, a-b].

These are implicit Law statements. Be childlike! This is a command of the Law. Otherwise one cannot enter the kingdom. This is simply terror and threat.

Chappell asserts that when the prodigal son confessed, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. The doors of the feast were opened automatically, because he was poor in spirit" [IIIA3b-c]. This assertion seems at first glance to be implied Gospel. The prodigal son repented and humbled himself and "The doors of the feast opened automatically, . . ." [IIIA3c]. However, the author adds the phrase ". . . because he was poor in spirit." In other words, the implication is that his humility was a work of merit that caused Divine Grace to be dispensed. In such a case the article of justification by grace through faith would be abrogated for man was contributing to his own salvation by the work of humility. This, then, would be the commingling of Law and Gospel. In IIIB, Chappell concocts

more of the same theological admixture. "Then, it is only through poverty of spirit that we remain in the kingdom." This, again, suggests that it is not by God's unmerited favor, but by man's accomplishments in humility that keeps man in a right relationship with God in the kingdom of His dear son. In IIIC, Chappell adds, "Then, poverty of spirit leads to blessedness because it fits us to serve in the kingdom." In his conclusion, Chappell says:

If in true humility we give first place to the Supreme Master, He will surely touch our heart harp and change its blundering discord into the exquisite music of abiding blessedness. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'  
[Conclusion A-B].

Be poor in Spirit! This is what one ought to do and be. This is a conclusion of the Law.

### Rhetorical Paradigm I

#### Law Ascertaining Questions

##### "Poverty that Makes Rich"

1. Does this sermon or any part of it produce thirst?

Yes.

- a. Does the thirst remain?

Yes.

- b. Is the subject still unrefreshed?

Yes.

2. Does this sermon produce the knowledge of sin or awaken sin in the hearer?

Yes.

- a. Does it terrorize, condemn, or threaten the hearer?

Yes.

b. Does it make any demand on the hearer?

Yes.

3. Are there any conditions at all that man is to meet in order to enjoy the promises offered in this sermon?

Yes, be like Christ!

4. Does this sermon produce contrition or encourage despair?

Yes.

5. Does this sermon require any works toward the end of making one godly?

Yes, be like Jesus and have His spirit in you and you will be godly.

6. To what group is this sermon addressed? To secure sinners? To penitent sinners?

To secure sinners.

### Rhetorical Paradigm II

#### Gospel Ascertaining Questions

"Poverty that Makes Rich"

1. Is this a message of joy?

No.

2. Does it declare of Christ, "I have been godly in your place?"

No.

3. Is there any requirement toward the end of salvation?

Yes, "Be like Jesus!"

4. Does the Gospel predominate in this sermon?

No.

5. Are there any conditions attached to any of the promises of God it offers?

Yes, "Be like Jesus."

6. Does this sermon give faith?

No.

7. Does it fill the hearer with joy and peace?

No.

8. Is the Gospel in this sermon aimed at only alarmed sinners?

There is no Gospel in this sermon.

9. Are both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel preached in this sermon?

No, only the Law is preached.

10. Is this sermon free from any commingling of Law and Gospel?

No.

11. Is the article of justification by grace through faith alone made clear in it?

No.

12. Are the sentences or statements of over-simplification and generalization as to who a Christian is and what a Christian will or will not do avoided?

No, for the implication here is that all true Christians will be rich like Christ.

13. Is the Gospel so clear and predominant in this sermon that confusion of conscience for lack of reliable and abiding comfort is avoided?

No.

14. Does the Gospel have general predominance in this sermon?

No.

15. Does this sermon make it clear what God is doing?

No.

16. Does the sermon make the Gospel as a gift, evident?

No.



17. Is the Gospel explicit in this sermon?

There is no explicit Gospel in this sermon.

### Summary and Preliminary Conclusions

We will now summarize and draw conclusions about what Chappell actually did in his sermonic discourses. First, the writer will assess the sermons drawn from the four volumes of fifty-seven sermons that his biographer viewed as representative of Clovis Chappell's preaching. This group of sermons will be designated Group I. We will then assess the sermons drawn from the four volumes of sixty-two sermons used here as a control group, which will be designated as Group II. We will then summarize and assess the results of both groups. In conclusion, the central question of this dissertation will be answered: Does Clovis Chappell, in these sermons, properly distinguish between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel? In other words, according to C. F. W. Walther's criteria, is Clovis G. Chappell an orthodox preacher of the Word?

In "The Man Who was Independent," Chappell begins immediately to wield the Law's judgment upon his hearers. 'One ought to strive for excellence.' 'One ought to be independent of things.' Paul learned to be content in all estates and 'the hearer should learn to be more like Paul.' 'One should learn independent courage in one's calling, too.' 'One also should be independent of one's peers.' Complete independence constitutes anarchy and wrecks good things including Christian homes. 'One should not carry a good thing to extremes.' Also, 'This is true of relationships so one ought to keep his relationships right.' Paul's independence was possible because he, first of all, was dependent upon

God. 'The hearer also should be utterly dependent upon God.' This type of independence reached its zenith in Jesus the Christ. How grandly independent he was. 'One should be like Jesus, for he was dependent only upon God.' 'Depending fully upon Him, we can fulfill this great word, 'Be dependent on nobody'" [Conclusion E5]. Chappell ends his 'The Man Who was Independent' as he began it, with the terrorizing demands of the Law.

In "Begin with God" Dr. Chappell begins anew making demands on his hearers. He roars about how hearers ought to be and what they should do. 'Do not be flung away from old convictions and do not let go of the old moorings.' ". . . for we can no more run past this ancient code [The Ten Commandments] than we can run past the north star" [Intro. B,C]. 'One cannot get away with disobeying God.' 'These are actually principles for living and they must be obeyed.' 'Einstein lived by the rules and so must the hearer.' 'This is the way one ought to think and function.' Furthermore, 'It was also true of Jesus and it ought to be true of the hearer.' 'The Psalmist and the prophets never tried to prove God.' 'Their faith and inner conviction was of the caliber that the reality of God was presumed.' 'That is what one ought to have inside himself today.' 'God is available to the hearer but he must meet certain conditions.' 'One must change to receive this benefit.' "There is a spiritual road to certainty . . . it is through the surrendered life . . . so do the will of God as best you know it" [IIIB4a, b].

In his conclusion Chappell makes some statements that are reminiscent of Gospel language.

God surrounds us as the atmosphere. . . . He is knocking as he woos us with His tender appeal. . . . 'If any man will open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me.' . . . [Conclusion A, 1-z].

But instead of declaring the soothing comfort of the Good News of what God has done freely for all men in Christ, Chappell falls back to the fumings and threatenings of the Law: ". . . if we are willing to give up our lesser Gods, we shall know the real God" [Conclusion B].

Chappell concludes "Begin with God" by declaring that the first commandment is in reality ". . . not merely a forbidding law, but a radiant Gospel" [Conclusion C]. Yet Chappell has preached only threatenings, terrors and the wrath of God. There is hardly a drop of pure soothing explicit Gospel for the sinner, lost and undone, by the crushings of the Law.

In "The Lost Blessing" Chappell warned, the church of John's Revelation was a church of an imperfect membership just like the church of today [IIIA1fiv]. 'The hearer ought to be more!' "The real opposition that Rome . . . offered was moral rottenness" [IIIB3]. Man has the same kind of opposition to battle today. 'So one needs to be careful and do right!' 'Homes were the victims then, and one needs to be vigilant that his home is not today's victim.' Chappell warns there was conflict then and there is conflict now. "'Think not,' said Jesus, 'that I come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword.'" [Thusly, one should see that the Law implies] "Life, for the Christian, is a battle, [so] 'Put on the whole armour of God . . . fight the good fight of faith, . . . lay hold on eternal life'" [IIIC2a-i-iii]. Here is what one ought to do and be. In the closing lines it appears Chappell may be injecting some Gospel to answer the demands of

the Law when he asserts: "The God of John's vision is also a loving and suffering God. . . . [he] is one . . . being 'wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities'" [IIID3, b]. There is on the throne ". . . a holy, almighty, suffering, and sacrificial God. . . ." [IIID4].

John is sure of victory because he is sure of God. "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" [IIIE4b]. Chappell declares, "What a faith for a day like ours. . . . We can face any danger unafraid if we are thus sure of God and of final victory" [IIIE4c, ii]. God did not conquer Rome by destroying it, but by converting it. It seems this would be a perfect opportunity to declare, 'Yes, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God but . . . Behold what God has done for us in Christ. For in His death he has taken upon himself the sin of the whole world. We are freely saved by his Grace through faith. Receive what God has done in Christ.' But, instead, Chappell turns to moralizing about the kind of struggle in which mankind is engaged. We are fighting for better men and homes, for a better church and so forth. The inference of the Law here is, 'so continue the fight! Be responsible citizens and God will bless you for your good work.' He concludes:

The Lord of hosts is with us, . . . therefore go forward in the fellowship of our victorious Lord, in the assurance that he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all our powers to ask or think [Conclusion B2, C].

'Go, therefore, and do thou likewise and God will reward accordingly.' In the conclusion where the Gospel should be poured forth like soothing oil, there is only more urgings, threats, and demands.

In "The Unfinished Sermon," Chappell begins with a dramatic flourish. He vividly and colorfully depicts Felix as a bored, sin-ridden adulterous rascal. "But even this hardened man had one big

moment that was full of promise . . . for He has sent for Paul to hear him concerning his faith in Christ" [Intro. C, 2]. At this point Chappell deftly begins to weave his hearers into the matrix of his sanctuary drama. With the skill of a consummate craftsman, he transfers the action from Felix's first century court to his own sanctuary and the hearts of his hearers. "What brought Felix to church?" [I] is his overt rhetorical inquiry. But covertly, he lifts up the more personal question to his hearer, 'What brought you to church?' Having caught his listeners in the weavings of his story, he begins to do what he has done in the previous homilies, he unleashes the ragings of the Law against them. Felix may have come to church because he was bored. He was tired, bored and fed up for life had lost its tang. Felix was in need of a new thrill. The implicit Law asks, 'Why did you come to church?' Are you not tired, or bored, or fed up with life? Has not life lost some of its tang for you? Are you also not in need of something new? Felix may have been present for material gain. 'Is the hearer present for the right reasons?' accuses the Law. Just as the Law fairly rages against his hearers, Chappell deftly suggests that his hearers as well as Felix may have come for the proper reason but, after all, are not both the hearer and Felix basically alike? In other words, is not the hearer also really a scoundrel at heart and a fallen sinner? "The difference between us is one of degree rather than kind" states Chappell [IIA1]. This is purely the threatenings and accusations of the Law. Chappell then initiated some Gospel overtures. "It is my conviction that Paul's sermon is motivated and shot through with love" [IIB]. If Chappell had intentions of preaching the healing balm of the Gospel, those good intentions went awry for no explicit Gospel was uttered.

Again Chappell zealously returns to the threatenings of the Law. Sin is insanity. It is just plain common sense to live right and to do right [IIC1ci]. You must be righteous for "A righteous God can give his full sanction to a righteous man, and to none other . . . . Righteousness, therefore, is fundamental" [IIC1cib'3']. The message is straight Law talk. Get right! Stay right! Or "Surely there is no vital Christianity without it. . . . The call of this hour and of every hour is for righteousness, for rightness" [IIC1cic'1'].

Although he preaches Law continually, Chappell demonstrates an imprecise understanding of the doctrine of the Law. "I find it easy to believe in a judgment to come because of the judgment of the past and present" [IIE3]. Rather than speak of the righteousness of a holy God and his wrath against sin and darkness, Chappell chooses to speak of the consequences of living with the results of poor judgment in the realm of personal decision-making. He calls this the "sentence . . . in that [one finds] . . . it easier ever after to take the lower road and harder to take the higher" [IIE3cii, a]. And again, "When I face the light and refuse to see it, I am judged in that I lose, in some measure, my capacity to see" [IIE3ciib']. And then, "When I hear the truth and refuse to respond to it, my sentence is that I become a little more dull of hearing" [IIE3ciic'].

Chappell does not perceive precisely that: 1) the Law puts a check on wicked men; 2) the Law acts as a mirror to show man how he looks in the sight of God (This convinces man of his sinfulness and his need of a savior for he sees himself as lost, condemned and totally unable to save himself); and 3) the Law, finally, is like a rule that shows man how God wants him to live in order to be pleasing to Him. In short,

the Law is that doctrine in the Scriptures that teaches us how we are to be, and what we are to do, and not to do. The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God. The Law is to be preached to all men, but especially to impenitent sinners, for the Law and its threats will terrify the hearts of the impenitent and bring them to a knowledge of their sin and to repentance. As Gal. 3:24 indicates ". . . the Law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith." Hence, the Law points and leads not away from but toward the Christ who is the end of the Law (Rom. 10:4).

At this point a crushed penitent sinner is a proper subject for the hearing of the Gospel. The proclamation of the Gospel will then comfort and strengthen them with the assurance that if they believe the Gospel, God forgives them all their sins freely through Christ, accepts them for His sake as God's children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them. The Law is not a moralistic 'learning to live with the consequences' or the moralistic 'proctor of life's lessons.' The Law is the crushing judgment of God unleashed upon impenitent sinners to bring them to their knees, or to prepare them to receive the free gift of God's salvation through the merit of Jesus Christ. Another way of saying this is: The Law cannot save man but it can convince him of his ungodliness and hence puts him on the way to salvation. The Law terrifies, crushes, and strikes down sinners, and in this penitent condition the gracious invitation of the free gift of God is given and received with great joy for it can here, truly be seen as good news.

Chappell did have, though imprecise and incomplete, a powerful sense of Law in his preaching. In III he raised the question, "What

effect did this sermon have on Felix?" Chappell's Felix clenched his fists until his knuckles grew white, fell into a heavy chill and shook and cried. All of these are the symptoms of sinners falling under the terror of the Law. Chappell did, then, have a sense of the Law in his preaching. Also Chappell had a sense of the Gospel. He said of Felix:

Had he waited a moment, Paul would have told him of a Christ that was able to make him right at the center of his being . . . he could become new. Had he listened only a little longer, Paul would have told him of one that could set him free, in whose fellowship he need never come into judgment. But the sermon was never finished. [For] Felix adjourned the meeting and left. . . . Felix had missed the high tide of the Spirit, that, taken at the flood, would have led him to life [IIIB1a, b, i, ii, 7].

It seems ironical, that what Chappell said of Felix might also be said of his own sermons, when measured against C. F. W. Walther's criteria. Had he continued with the proclamation of the Gospel, he might here be declared an oracle whose compelling proclamation put men in right relationship with God. However, like Paul's discourse to Felix, ". . . the sermon was never finished" [IIIB5bi]. The Gospel was never explicitly and boldly declared. Chappell concluded his discourse not with the soothing ointment of the Gospel for hurting, bruised sinners but with a resounding call to repentance.

Group I is marked by a saturation of the doctrine of the Law and a drought of explicit Gospel.

#### An Analysis of the Control Group Discourses

In the control group, or Group II, the sermons immediately fall into the same vein as did Group I. There is a smattering reference to the love and favor of God, but no explicit Gospel is preached.

Chappell, in "The Great Refusal: Jonah," calls the book of Jonah ". . . a wonderful Gospel in itself . . . there is not another



book more radiant with the light of the divine love" [Introduction C2].

He adds some Gospel sounding coloration in these words:

God is still speaking [to men today]: and stirs men up. There is not a single soul listening to me at this moment but what at sometime in your life there has come a definite and sure word from God. You have felt the impress of His spirit upon your spirit [II, A, 1].

That, however, is as close to the Gospel as Chappell came. There was no proclaiming of what God has done in Christ freely for all men.

However, there continues to be an abundance of implicit Law:

You have seen his finger pointing to the road in which you ought to walk and to the task He was calling you to perform. . . . [for] God does move upon us, call us, and command us. God stirs us up [IIA3, C2, 3].

These are Law assertions.

Chappell in IIA1-3 provides an interesting Law-Gospel combination. 'In His care for man God has spoken to everyone of us for He is a caring God.' 'In His caring He both commands us and stirs us up.' Here, then, as this writer stated in the original analysis, is an implicit Gospel assertion coupled with explicit Law statements. 'God loves you, God cares for you,' on the one hand, but on the other hand, 'The reader needs to take a look in the mirror and see his inadequacies.' In short, 'Here is what the reader ought to be and here is what the reader is, in reality. Take a look at the discrepancies, please.' The sermon loses strength here for the Gospel was only weakly or implicitly suggested but the Law is boldly in evidence. 'The reader fall short here for he missed this important mark.'

It is in "Jonah" that Chappell most closely approaches the doctrine of the Gospel. He asks, "Could it be possible that God really loved Nineveh though it was outside the covenant? Jonah did not want to believe this, but he had to believe it" [IIIA3, B]. God loved

Nineveh, Chappell asserted, even though it was outside the covenant. Her sin grieved God. All of this indicates a sense of the Gospel but there is no explicit proclamation of the Good News. Thus the moment passes and the Gospel goes unpreached.

He continues with the Law talk:

We [too like Jonah] are often hampered. . . . [we feel it] . . . useless to preach to some folk. There is no use trying to Christianize Africa or even our next door neighbor [IIID1ai-iii].

In short, we do not do what we ought to do. Here, again, is a slight hint of Gospel. "[God has put in us] . . . an insatiable hunger and an unquenchable thirst that none but God can satisfy" [IIID1b]. But it, too, passes with no realization of the doctrine of the Gospel explicitly stated.

The Law talk continues to increase until it completely dominates the sermon. ". . . Selfish belief did not perish with Jonah" [IIIE3a] [condemnation and shame]. "There are two cities on your map. . . . You are going to Nineveh or to Tarshish" [IIIH3]. This is a Law statement. 'The reader also ought to rightly choose.' Going to one's own Tarshish is rebellion against God. 'If one does not go and do what God wants him to go and do, he is a rebel and renounces the friendship of God.' This is threat, condemnation, and terrorization. When you are not doing or being what God wants of you and you are calm or in repose, you are in trouble. The implications are those that bring terror, condemnation and warnings against the hearer. These are purely Law statements. These statements provoke feelings of despair and contrition. These are clearly emotions that the Law engenders. However, Chappell momentarily broaches the Gospel: "As long as sin breaks your heart and your disobedience keeps you awake at night, there is hope for you" [IVD1]. But,

he suggests, when one becomes content with his wickedness or when one comes to believe it is best for him, then he is in danger indeed. Threats, terror and condemnation saturate this section of Chappell's discourse. Again and again and throughout the remainder of this sermon, Chappell dispenses death by the Law to his hearers. Recounting Jonah's being cast overboard, Chappell enunciates His Gospel for this sermon:

When the tempest of this world's sin was to be stilled, there was no cheaper way than for Christ to allow Himself to be thrown overboard. Livingstone followed the example of self-giving when he sacrificed himself to still the tempest of Africa. This is the price we must all pay for real service [IV, B1, 2-3].

Chappell momentarily hinted here that Christ was the sacrifice for our sins but rather than move toward a Gospel-rich conclusion, he degenerated into moralizing discourse about an exemplary Christ. Again Chappell fleetingly flirts with a Gospel conclusion: "The application is for all of us. If you will do this today, stop running from God and turn and walk with Him" [Conclusion B, 1]. This is a Law statement, 'do this,' and an implied 'repent!' At this point should have come the Good News of what God has done in Christ freely by His Grace, but it does not. The Law, here, was given weakly and the Gospel more weakly still.

In his conclusion, Chappell urges his hearers to:

. . . stop running from God and turn and walk with Him. Then you will find that Nineveh is not a city of restlessness and wretchedness. You will find that it is a city rich in fellowship with God. With this fellowship comes the blessed experience of that peace that passes all understanding [Conclusion B1, 2, a-b].

Chappell concludes by informing his hearers of the pleasant benefits of receiving the Gospel without once explicitly telling them how to receive it.

Chappell begins his discourse "The Steadfast Face" by depicting Jesus as a man of joy. He calls this aspect of Jesus' personality ". . . the Christ of the sunny face" [IA]. He continues:

We cannot read the gospels without realizing that Jesus was a man of deep and genuine joy. His was the sunniest face that ever looked at the world. This is indicated by the fact that out of His own experience He could give utterance to the Beatitudes: 'Oh, the joy of the poor in spirit . . . oh, the blessedness of the meek. . . .' Only a heart full of song could give birth to such glad shouts as these [IA1-3a-b].

In reality all of these are Law statements. 'Here is the kind of conduct God requires out of the hearer.' 'One must be poor in spirit, one ought to mourn, one is required to be meek, it is one's duty to be merciful' and so forth. This introduction clearly reminds the hearer, 'I have much demanded of me.' This demand lifts the knowledge of sin, terrorizes, and condemns him. This is the message of Law not Gospel. It cannot bring joy.

There are some implicit Gospel sounding phrases uttered.

The Gospel also shows us the Christ of the tender face. This is the picture that gripped the hearts of men. His is a tenderness that drew to Him outcasts who dared not approach any other [IC, 1-2].

This is all implicit Gospel language.

In IIID1-2 Chappell continues:

The fact that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the long ago ought to hearten and strengthen us to go to our Jerusalem. Jerusalem is more than a spot on the map; it is a matter of doing God's will. We go to Jerusalem when we accept God's plan and purpose for our lives.

Over and over here we hear the demands of the implied Law. 'Jesus went to Jerusalem to his destiny,' [so] 'You should also follow His example and do the same thing.' 'It's a matter of doing God's will in your life, too.' 'We go to Jerusalem when we accept God's will for our

lives.' 'Therefore, you must accept God's will for your life and go to your Jerusalem.'

This sermon does nothing but awaken sin in the hearer and produce the terror and condemnation of the Law. It makes demand after demand on the hearer and encourages contrition and despair.

Jesus was not the slightest bit unwilling to perform God's will. 'Neither should this reader be in any way at any time unwilling to do God's will,' asserts the Law. Jesus' love would not allow Him to do less than His best. 'Your love should be of the same caliber.' By accepting that cross Jesus had remade and is still remaking the world. This, from beginning to ending is a Law sermon. From the first line to the last it rains condemnation and threatenings. The Law, here, crushes and destroys and produces contrition and encourages despair.

Even his conclusion is of the Law: "God grant this day that you and I might renew our vows and again steadfastly set our faces to go to Jerusalem" [Conclusion B1, 2]. In other words: 'The reader ought to renew his vows so that he can do what is right.' This is clearly a demand of the Law.

Finally, he recounts the story of a courageous "decision for Christ" that sparked a revival that saved an entire community and adds, "By that courageous decision he not only found Christ for himself, but was the means of helping to bring a new spiritual springtime to his entire city" [Conclusion B]. The implication is clear: 'If you had courage you would do the same thing right now.'

In "The Steadfast Face" Chappell's hearers end up where they started out, smarting under the chastening of the Law. This is not Good News.

The "Cynic's New Year" is an exercise in creative futility. It is altogether a dark sermon shrouded in Law, judgment, and despair. Chappell in his brilliant candor reaches out and stuns his hearers. "Here is a man for whom life obviously has grown stale: He has allowed himself to become a cynic" [Introduction]. Chappell vividly describes a man devastated by the Law and reeling in despair. From this point, Chappell adds Law on top of judgment until his hearer, too, is reeling in despair, having been leveled by the Law. Again and again his Law shouts, 'Don't do that, do this! Don't be that, be this!'

He does emit a bit of pastoral spirit in these brief lines of comfort:

He is not a cynic because he is passing through a temporary fit of the blues. The best and strongest men sometimes lost heart: Elijah did. . . . so did John the Baptist [IB, 1, a-b].

Therefore, Chappell infers, 'do not get down on yourself.' 'You should not allow a fit of depression to cause you to think yourself cynical.' Chappell's cynic is not bothered with a cynicism of the head but a cynicism of the heart. His trouble is that he has no faith in God. Being without God, he naturally is without hope. Chappell allows Law to shout at the heart of the hearer: 'Disbelief is death! If one is in unbelief, he is without God. Therefore why not come to belief?' This is simply the condemnation of the Law that leads to despair. For a moment Chappell approaches Gospel language. The Bible, says Chappell, teaches with equal emphasis that man may be saved from sin. This is Gospel inference but it is not followed up or developed in any way with an explicit proclamation of the Gospel. Chappell merely drops the matter after a second similar assertion! "The Bible does teach that men are lost, but it teaches with equal certainty that they are capable of being saved" [IIE2c].

Chappell makes this statement without even a passing reference to what God has done in Christ. There is no explicit message here of the saving free Grace of a loving God.

Chappell's analysis raised a practical pastoral question, 'Now what was the practical effect of this lack of faith on the preacher's life: That is, what did his cynicism do to him?' [III]. His own response was:

It killed his sense of obligation. He had scholarship and vast ability, but he felt wisdom was vanity and he had no responsibility to be of service to others. . . . He was, therefore, morally an infant. . . . His lack of faith paralyzed all effort to help heal the world's open sore. . . . His cynicism made him wretched. It took all the bloom and beauty out of life [IIIA, 1-2, B, C, 1].

The net effect was to rendered him unusable and unhappy. The Law here assails: 'The reader must also strive toward responsible living; he too must heal the world's wounds, serve others, and increase his faith.' The implicit demand here, produces the knowledge of sin, terrorizes, condemns and threatens the hearer. It is completely an exercise in the doctrine of the Law.

At the end of his homily Chappell makes this Gospel-like assertion:

But this cynic seems to have come to a discovery of God. Through this discovery his whole attitude toward life was changed and all things became new [IV, A].

Yet his new sense of God only brought him a new sense of duty. He came to say, 'I ought and I owe' for, as Chappell views it, to discover God is to discover duty. What Chappell's projection really indicated is this: His cynic felt the blows of the Law and his darkened script was made lighter and he had a new sense of obligation within. He read the Law and the dulled script on his unconverted heart became clear. He

then, had become simply another struggling sinner who now dutifully attempted to keep the Law. There is no oasis of Gospel in this desert of Law.

In closing, the best Chappell could muster through the lips of his cynic was the Law admonition to contemporary youth,

. . . "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let the heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment [IVB2b].

Chappell, after pages of implicit and explicit Law, closes with one line of weak and implicit Gospel. "Instead of lamenting with the cynic . . . we shall shout with Saint Paul, 'Old things are passed away; behold they are become new'" [IVC4].

Chappell entitles the final sermon in the control group,

"Poverty that Makes Rich." He asserts:

The audience that Jesus faced in that long ago is very close akin to the audience He would face were He to come to our city this morning. The heart of humanity remains unchanged through the years. . . . He would have no better direction to give them than that given in our text [Introduction D, 1, 5].

This introduction has a Gospel aura about it in that it vividly depicts the winsome nature of Jesus the Christ. The response intended here would be, 'Jesus really cared for people and he still cares: even for me.'

These are implicit Gospel or joy creating responses. There is, however, no explicit Gospel spoken here. Jesus, Chappell contends, tried to convey this truth:

Happiness is not born of any outward condition or circumstance, . . . Happiness depends not upon what we have, nor upon what we do, but upon what we are. . . . Happiness, if it ever comes, must come from within. . . . It depends upon the kind of man that lives in the house. The kind of man that is happy, said Jesus, is the man that is poor in spirit [IA, C, 2, b, 3].



He continues, 'Now while we have doubts about the poor in spirit being blessed, you may be sure that the proud in spirit are unblessed' [ID]. The obvious implication is: 'It is not God pleasing to have proud flesh.' Do not be proud! Be this way, not that! Do this, do not do that! These are Law statements. The effect of the Law produces the knowledge of sin. It demands of the sinner, implicitly, to be more than he now is. Miserable are those who are not poor in spirit, the terrifying Law cries out. You ought to be happy as Jesus said. But you really are not, are you? This is strictly the condemnation of the Law.

Chappell's depiction of "Poverty of spirit" as incarnate in Jesus and "Manhood at its best" is surely a stroke of artistry. However, the very concept of Jesus as exemplary manhood is implicit Law. Here is the reader's example, do this! Be like Jesus! The Law alone makes such demands. Again, the Law says, Be childlike. Be teachable in spirit. Have childlike regard for the Higher Power. But these are only terrorizing threats of the Law. After speaking of the return of the prodigal son, Chappell adds:

Then, poverty of spirit leads to blessedness because it fits us to serve in the kingdom. . . . If in true humility we give first place to the Supreme Master. He will surely touch our heart harp and change its blundering discord: Into the exquisite music of abiding blessedness. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' [IIIC, Con. A, 1-2, B].

In other words, this is what one ought to be and do. This is a Law conclusion of a sermon that is almost totally saturated by the threat-enings of the Law. As this writer noted in "The Steadfast Face," there is an aura of Gospel about the Beatitudes but in reality, all of these statements of Jesus' are Law statements. Jesus is saying clearly, 'Here is the kind of conduct God requires of believers. They must be

poor in spirit, they ought to mourn, they are required to be meek, it is a believer's duty to be merciful, and so forth.' These are not Gospel statements of the Good News. Far from it, these are threats and demands of the Law. They crush and terrorize the hearer. There is no liberty in the Law whatever. Only the Gospel sets men free. But, in this sermon the sinner crushed and undone by the demands of the Law received no refreshment from the throne of Grace. There is no Good News here!

Two groups of sermons have now been analyzed. The first group, or Group I, was the sermons drawn from the four volumes acknowledged as representative of Dr. Clovis Chappell's preaching. The second group, or the control group known as Group II, were those sermons drawn from four volumes representing four decades of preaching. The decades represented were the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s and one volume of sermons from Chappell's post-retirement years, the 1950s. Both groups of sermons were then analyzed according to the set of criteria drawn from the gist of C. F. W. Walther's The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel.

### Conclusion

Dr. Chappell's sermons in both Groups (I and II) fall into very predictable patterns. From the beginning to the end of his discourses they are creations of the Law. Chappell, both by implicit suggestion, and explicit statement, relentlessly shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thought, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God. This Law preaching threatens the transgressors of the Law with God's wrath and His temporal, and eternal punishment. Chappell's Law makes continual demands on man but man cannot meet the demands of the Law. This Law demands man's whole heart; perfect purity and

holiness in thought, word and deed. Chappell again and again uses the invective of the Law to put a check on the wrong-doing of wicked men. Like a skilled craftsman he burnishes the Law as a mirror and shows his hearer how he looks in the sight of God. In so doing, Chappell skillfully allows the Law to convince his hearers of their sinfulness and their need of a Savior for he deftly allows the hearer to see himself as lost, condemned, and totally unable to save himself. Chappell perhaps, is at his best when he allows the Law, like a rule, to show man how God wants him to live in order to be pleasing to Him. In short, Chappell's sermons teach his hearers how they are to be, and what they are to do, and not to do in a masterful way. Chappell, with consummate skill unleashes the Law and shows his hearers their sin and the wrath of God. Chappell adeptly, though sometimes imprecisely, preaches the Law to all men, but especially to impenitent sinners. In his artistic hands the Law and its threats terrify the hearts of the unrepentant and, without question, bring them to a knowledge of their sin and to repentance. However, Chappell, with all of his mastery and skill, habitually makes one mistake that neutralizes what it would seem most desirable to achieve. He fails (in these sermons analyzed) to use the Law as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. He does not allow the Law to point and lead men to Christ. For after he has preached the Law with considerable skill, he simply does not follow through with the explicit preaching of the Gospel. On numerous occasions, noted in the summary analyses, Chappell makes Gospel-like sounds. At times he implies something of the Gospel. He even states that in Christ God has redeemed man. However, not once did Chappell explicitly preach the Gospel. That is, not once did he explicitly state or preach that Christ shows the

penitent sinner: 'I have been godly in your place.' He did not declare: 'The Gospel does not require good works of the sinner to make him godly. The Gospel requires only faith.' He did not point out that this faith is created in man by the Holy Spirit. This faith justifies freely. This faith, which the Holy Spirit creates, justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold on Christ. Justifying or saving faith must not be construed as a work which man can produce in himself. Faith is not a mental exercise or a work that man can produce in himself nor can saving faith or faith that justifies co-exist with mortal sin. Faith alone saves or justifies for through faith only can man receive, cling, or lay hold on the forgiveness of his sins. This faith keeps looking to the promises and believing with full assurance that God forgives because Christ did not die in vain.

Chappell did not proclaim: 'Only this faith conquers the terror of sin and death.' The Gospel proclaims that this is true. The glad tidings declare that all men are under sin and are worthy of eternal wrath and death but through faith, for Christ's sake, forgiveness of sins and justification are offered to, and received by the penitent sinner gratuitously.

Chappell failed to declare that faith simply grasps the promise of God. Faith lays claim to God's mercy. Because of what God has done in Christ this grasping faith receives the promised reconciliation and the believer is accounted righteous and a child of God, not on account of his own purity but by mercy on account of Christ. Chappell should have proclaimed that faith alone justifies because man receives the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit through faith alone.

His hearers needed to know that the Scriptures testify that we are accounted righteous through faith. By freely accepting the forgiveness of sins, faith sets against God's wrath not any merit of the penitent sinner but the merits of Christ, our mediator and propitiator. By grace through faith the Holy Spirit regenerates the believer, frees him from death, brings forth a new life in his heart and makes all things new. This is the Gospel. When sinners are crushed, terrorized and undone, this soothing message should be immediately applied. This was C. F. W. Walther's understanding of what an evangelical or orthodox preacher does when sinners are crushed. In the sermons evaluated, Clovis Chappell failed to do this. The Law was preached in severity but the Gospel was not once explicitly preached, according to the criteria of C. F. W. Walther.

All of the evaluations concluded (in both Group I sermons and the control group, or Group II homilies) that while Chappell preached the Law from the beginning of his discourse to its end, the Gospel was not once explicitly preached.

The quest of this dissertation has been to seek the answer to the question: Was Clovis Chappell an orthodox preacher of the Word as described by C. F. W. Walther? That is, was Chappell a correct model for preaching in that he properly distinguished between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel in his own preaching? Did people who were to learn from Chappell receive their education from the feet of one who properly distinguished between the Law and the Gospel?

The conclusion that must be drawn from the analysis of the selected sermons of Chappell in both Group I and in Group II is this: That while Clovis Chappell was undoubtedly a colorful preacher and a

master of the spoken word, and while he was a consummate spokesman of the Law, he fell short of being an orthodox preacher of the Word when measured by the set of criteria drawn from the gist of C. F. W. Walther's The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel. It is not within the scope of this study to assert that Chappell may or may not have preached the Law and the Gospel rightly in his pulpit or at other places. However, within the context of those sermons evaluated for the purposes of this study, it may be factually stated: Clovis G. Chappell did not properly distinguish between the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel according to the set of criteria drawn from the lectures of C. F. W. Walther in his opus The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel.

## APPENDIX I

The following is a schematic of C. F. W. Walther's  
The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel.

### Thesis I

The doctrinal content of the entire Holy Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, is made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other: viz the Law and the Gospel.

- I. The points of difference between the Law and the Gospel are as follows:
  - A. The Law and the Gospel differ as regards the manner of their being revealed to man.
    1. Man was created with the Law written in his heart: in consequence of the Fall, the script became dull but not completely eradicated.
    2. Therefore, when the Law is preached even to the most ungodly person his conscience will tell him "that is true."
    3. When the Gospel, is preached, however, to this same individual, his conscience does not tell him the Gospel is true: rather the preaching of the Gospel angers the ungodly for it does not make sense.
  - B. The Law and the Gospel differ also in their content.
    1. The Law tells us what we ought to do.
    2. The Gospel reveals to us only what God is doing.
  - C. The Law and the Gospel differ by reason of their promises: they both promise everlasting life and salvation.
    1. However, all promises of the Law are made on the condition that we fulfill the Law perfectly.
    2. The Gospel promises us the Grace of God and salvation without any condition at all.
  - D. The Law and the Gospel differ as relates to threats.

1. The Gospel contains no threats whatever.
  2. The Law contains nothing but threats.
  3. Every person remains an unbeliever unless the Holy Ghost works knowledge in him.
- E. The Law and the Gospel differ concerning the effects of these two doctrines.
1. There are three effects of the Law.
    - a. The Law tells us what to do but does not enable us to do it.
      - (1) Hence, the Law causes us to become more unwilling to keep the Law.
      - (2) The effect: to increase the lust for sinning.
    - b. The Law reveals or uncovers a man's sins.
      - (1) The effect: man falls into a dilemma and is hurled into despair.
    - c. The Law produces contrition.
      - (1) The Law and the wrath of God conjures up terror of hell and death but offers no comfort.
      - (2) If no additional teaching beside the Law is applied, he must despair and perish in his sin.
  2. There are three effects of the Gospel.
    - a. The Gospel when demanding faith offers and gives us faith in that very demand.
    - b. The Gospel does not censure or reprove sinners but rather removes all terror replacing it with joy and peace in the Holy Ghost.
    - c. The Gospel does not require that man furnish anything good to receive its blessings.
- F. There is a sixth point of difference between Law and Gospel and it is this: each doctrine applies to entirely different persons.
1. The Law is to be preached to secure sinners.
  2. The Gospel is to be preached to alarmed sinners.
  3. This is true because the end for which it [Law and Gospel] is to operate is utterly different.



- a. The Law is preached to the secure sinners to bring him to repentance.
- b. The Gospel is preached to the person who has become alarmed or sad-hearted who now needs only the Gospel comfort.

### Thesis II

Only he is an orthodox teacher who not only presents all the articles of faith in accordance with Scripture, but also rightly distinguishes from each other the Law and the Gospel.

I. There are two parts to Thesis Two.

- A. The first part states this requisite of an orthodox teacher: that he present all articles of faith in accordance with the Scripture and in such a fashion that we have presented the Word of God absolutely and unadulterated.
- B. The second is an equally significant measurement of the orthodox preacher: in addition to the above he must rightly distinguish between Law and Gospel.

### Thesis III

Rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is the most difficult and highest art of Christians in general and of theology in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience.

I. The doctrine of the Law and Gospel can be readily learned but the difficulty lies in the applying of this doctrine.

- A. The proctor of the mastery of this doctrine is not the human intellect but the Holy Spirit through daily application or in the school of experience.
- B. The minister himself must learn to apply this doctrine to himself in his own life situation.
  - 1. Both David and Peter failed at the task of properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel on the personal level.
  - 2. Our own heart estate plays a significant role in the process of properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel.
  - 3. When our heart does not condemn us, it is easy to distinguish Law and Gospel.

4. Remember when the Law condemns you, lay hold on the Gospel and say "Away with you. Your demands have been fully met, and you have nothing to demand of me."

## II. The Pastor must learn to minister the Law and the Gospel.

- A. This must he do to each person in season exactly what he needs either Law or Gospel.
- B. The Preacher must preach in such a way that every hearer feels "He means me"; that is: the preacher must understand how to depict accurately the inward condition of every one of his hearers.
- C. The private ministration of the Law and Gospel is more difficult than the public ministration of it.
  1. A pastor may be deceived by a pious hypocrite.
  2. A pastor must treat any person as a Christian when he appears to be one and vice versa.
- D. Non-Christians differ so considerably that we must remember that a preacher can be truly fitted out for his calling only by the Holy Spirit.
- E. Finally, the greatest difficulty is encountered in dealing with true Christians according to their spiritual condition.

## Thesis IV

The true knowledge of the distinction between Law and Gospel is not only a glorious light affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scripture, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.

- I. The Scripture remains a sealed book full of contradictions until the reader learns the proper distinction between Law and Gospel.
  - A. Before this distinction is learned the Scripture seems on the one hand to bless the reader and on the other hand to condemn him.
  - B. A proper understanding reveals two distinct doctrines in both the Old Testament and the New.
    1. The moment we learn to know the distinction between the Law and Gospel, it is as if the sun were rising upon the Scriptures.
    2. Then we can behold all the contents of the Scriptures in the most beautiful harmony.

- C. Once we gain the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, we understand the purpose of the Law better.
  - 1. The Law teaches us that we are utterly unable to fulfill the Law: through the Law comes a knowledge of sin.
  - 2. The Law convinces us of our ungodliness and hence puts us on the way to salvation.
  - 3. Once we know what a sweet message the gospel is we shall receive it with exuberant joy.
- D. The Law has not been abolished, rather it plays the significant role of bringing man to repentance through being confronted with the knowledge of sin.

### Thesis V

The first manner of confounding Law and Gospel is one most easily recognized and the grossest. It is adopted, for instance, by papists, Socinians, and rationalists and consists in this, that Christ is represented as a new Moses or lawgiver, and the Gospel is turned into a doctrine of meritorious works, while at the same time those who teach that the Gospel is the message of the free Grace of God in Christ are condemned and anathematized, as is done by the papists.

- I. The decrees of the council of Trent describe the fact and function of the Gospel in such manner as to cast the saving Christ in a role of the New Lawgiver.
  - A. The Gospel in their scheme prescribes morals.
  - B. The papists see the Gospel as a new set of Laws like unto those Moses prescribed.
    - 1. Additional laws thus would only serve to drive man to despair.
    - 2. This would not be good news.
- II. Christ came to proclaim forgiveness to all who receive Him.
  - A. Christ states the content of the Gospel in concrete terms.
    - 1. Christ has destroyed the kingdom of the devil and accomplished salvation for us.
    - 2. All that man has to do is know that he has been redeemed, that he has been set free from prison, that he has no more to do than believe and accept this message and rejoice over it with all his heart.

- B. Now that the rule of the devil has been destroyed in anything that I do, I am free and there is nothing for me to do but appropriate this gift to myself.
  - 1. This is what the Scripture means when it says "Believe."
  - 2. "Believe" here means to "claim as your own what Christ has acquired."
- III. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is an advance summary statement of the Gospel to come: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
  - A. The Messiah did not condition his forgiveness on the estate of their character or manner of living but instead He writes His Law directly into their hearts.
  - B. A summary of the Gospel is this: we have forgiveness of sin by the free grace of God for the sake of Jesus Christ.
  - C. Anyone therefore imagining that Christ is a new lawgiver and has brought to us new laws cancels the entire Christian religion.
    - 1. The Christian religion says: "You are a lost and condemned sinner; you cannot be your own Savior."
    - 2. Do not despair on that account for Christ has acquired salvation for you.
- IV. Christ did not introduce any new laws nor abrogate the Law of Moses.
  - A. Christ only opened up the spiritual meaning of the Law.
  - B. He did not come to issue new laws, but to fulfill the Law for us, so that we may share His fulfillment.

#### Thesis VI

In the second place the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is not preached in its full sternness and the Gospel not in its full sweetness, when on the contrary, Gospel elements are mingled with the Law and the Law with the Gospel.

- I. The commingling of both doctrines occurs when Gospel elements are mingled with the Law, and vice versa.
  - A. Gal. 3:11 teaches that ". . . no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, . . . for 'The just shall live by faith,' and the Law is not of faith. . . ."

1. Faith must never be seen as a little work men do to distinguish those who go to heaven from those who go to hell.
  2. Rather man becomes righteous in the sight of God by faith: that is, gratuitously by grace, by God's making righteousness a gift to him.
  3. Faith is just that: reaching out the hand to receive God's gift of salvation. "Stretch out your hand and you have it."
- B. The Law to be rightly preached must be proclaimed in such a manner that there remains in it nothing pleasant (that is to say no Gospel elements) to the lost and condemned sinners.
1. The Law is shamefully perverted when injected by any sweetness or Gospel elements: there is no sweetness in Law.
    - a. Every sweet ingredient injected into the Law is poison.
    - b. It renders this heavenly medicine ineffective [and] neutralizes its operation.

## II. There is a proper way to preach the Law.

- A. The Law is spiritual in that it works on the spirit rather than the flesh.
1. The spirit in man to which the Law is directed is to man's will, heart, and affections.
  2. There are no exceptions to this rule: that is the way it operates in every instance.
- B. The Law makes no one godly. Rom. 8:20, but rather the opposite is true when the Law begins to produce its proper effect.
1. Persons who feel its power begin to fume and rage against God.
  2. When the Law is preached in a salutary way, hearers respond, "If this man is right, I am lost."
  3. Those resisting God may say: "This is not the way for an evangelical minister to preach!"
- C. The Law must precede the preaching of the Gospel.
1. If the Law does not precede the preaching of the Gospel, the Gospel will have no effect.
  2. At first the people will exclaim, "How terrible is all this!" But when the preacher passes from the Law over to

the Gospel, the people perceive the preacher's intention of exposing the awful nature of sin and are cheered by the Gospel.

### Thesis VII

In the third place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is preached first and then the Law; sanctification first and then justification; faith first and then repentance; good works first and then grace.

- I. A wrong division of the Word of God occurs when the various doctrines are not presented in their order. There are four types of this perverse sequence that are possible.
  - A. The order in the Lord's preaching and His apostles, is always the same: "Repentance is called for and then belief." Mark 1:15,: Law first and then Gospel, Acts 20:2.
  - B. The order is distorted when sanctification of life is preached before justification [or] the forgiveness of sins.
  - C. The third perversion of the true sequence -- first Law, and then Gospel -- occurs when faith is preached first and repentance next.
  - D. The fourth perversion occurs when good works are preached first and then grace.
- II. In Romans we have a true pattern of correct sequence.
  - A. First, the Law is preached threatening men with the wrath of God.
  - B. Next the Gospel is preached announcing the comforting promises of God.
  - C. This is followed by instruction regarding the things we are to do after we have become new men.
  - D. Not until this entire pattern had been worked through would they say to their people: "Now you must show your gratitude toward God."

### Thesis VIII

In the fourth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins or the Gospel to those who live securely in their sin.

- I. The Word of God is not rightly divided when the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins.
  - A. A terrified sinner should receive consolation, grace, and forgiveness of sins: the promise of life and salvation must be preached to broken-hearted who are in terror because of their sins.
  - B. Both the Lord and his apostles set this practice for themselves.
- II. The second part of Thesis VII tells us that the Word of God is not rightly divided if the Gospel is preached to such as live securely in their sin.
  - A. The consolation of the Gospel is not for "secure sinners" for it is useless to offer mercy to the Godless.
  - B. Christ's own example teaches us to preach Law to the secure sinner as He preached it to the Pharisees and scribes.
    - 1. He had not a drop of consolation to give them.
    - 2. When the secure sinner penitently begins to "labor and is heavy laden," then he is a fit subject for the consoling rest of the Gospel.
  - C. The Apostles followed the same practice as their Lord in that they preached the Law with such force that their hearers were cut to the quick.

#### Thesis IX

In the fifth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when sinners who have been struck down and terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and the Sacraments, but to their own prayers and wrestlings with God in order that they may win their way into a state of grace; in other words, when they are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace.

- I. The issue is what is the appropriate measure to take when a terrified sinner is struck down by the Law.
  - A. When a sinner is struck down, the Law has done its part.
  - B. In Acts as soon as the sinners were struck down and terrified by the Law, the apostles applied the Gospel.
  - C. The Lord Himself practiced the same thing with Saul.
  - D. When a sinner was struck down no other demands of any kind were made, rather the Gospel was quickly applied.

- II. The method of the sects differ from Christ and the apostles in that they incorrectly preach the Law.
  - A. This is done in that their appeal is to the imagination and hence their words fail to sink into the sinner's heart.
  - B. You must preach the Law to where the terrified sinner puts off completely the garment of his own righteousness and declares himself a miserable, wicked man, whose heart is sinning continually, to rightly preach the Law.
- III. The sects also err in that they do not preach the Gospel right.
  - A. They do not preach the Gospel to such as are alarmed and in anguish, but first direct alarmed sinners to a long list of efforts to be accomplished to be received into grace.
  - B. These teachers encourage the sinner to some 'feeling' which most likely could be more attributed to a lively discourse than to a testimony of the Holy Spirit.
  - C. This faulty practice is based on three awful errors.
    - 1. They fail to see in Christ a complete reconciliation of man to God for they view God as hard to deal with.
    - 2. They regard the Gospel's purpose as instruction for men.
    - 3. They teach false doctrine concerning faith in that they regard it as a quality in man by which he is improved.
  - D. The Scriptural answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?"
    - 1. You must believe; hence you are not to do anything at all yourself.
    - 2. Paul essentially told the jailer, "You are to do nothing but accept what God has done for you, and you have it and become a blessed person."
- IV. The doctrine that the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness in the sight of God, and eternal salvation, is obtained in no other way than by the believer's putting his confidence in the written Word, in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper, and in absolution, is most offensive to reformed theologians for they object that this way is too mechanical.
  - A. God acts in the sacraments in a special way.
    - 1. Baptism is more than a washing, for the Spirit of God and Jesus' blood connects with it for the purpose of cleansing man of his sins. (Acts 22:16)



2. The Lord's Supper is not an earthly feast but a heavenly feast on earth, in which not only bread and wine, or only the body and blood of Christ are given, but together with these, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation is given and sealed to us.
  3. The sacraments are the visible Word: Augustine.
- B. The absolution pronounced by a poor, sinful preacher is not his absolution, but the absolution of Jesus Christ Himself.
1. The preacher absolves a person by the command of Christ.
  2. The power of absolution or 'The Office of the Keys' is the peculiar church power which Christ has given His church on earth to forgive the sins of the penitent sinner or to retain the sins of those who refuse to repent.
  3. The power is not given to the preachers or the servants of the church, but to the church.
- C. The removal of sins is not based on a mysterious power of the pastor, but on the fact that Christ has taken away the sins of the world long ago and that everybody is to tell this fact to his fellowman.
- V. There are people who are spiritually dead who regard themselves as good Christians.
- A. These have nothing but the dead faith of the intellect.
1. They have never felt a real anguish or terror on account of their sin.
  2. They have never repented on their knees before God bewailing the damnable condition under sin.
- B. They may say 'I believe,' but their heart is not conscious of it.
1. A person who cannot say, "I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good," Ps. 34:8, must not regard himself as being in a state of true faith.
  2. Any person who has never felt the testimony of the Spirit that he is the child of God is spiritually dead.
- C. Law and Gospel are grievously commingled by those who assert that assurance of forgiveness requires prayerful struggle.
- D. We must be careful to distinguish between one who is dead and one who is afflicted.

- E. The fanatical sects all have this grievous error in common, that they do not rely solely on Christ and His Word, but chiefly on something that takes place in themselves.

### Thesis X

In the sixth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous and saves him for the reason that it produces in him love and reformation of his mode of living.

- I. It is necessary to understand clearly why faith saves.
  - A. The faith which the Holy Spirit creates justifies because it clings to the gracious promises of Christ and because it lays hold on Christ.
  - B. The faith which the Holy Ghost creates cannot but do good works: spontaneously because it cannot help doing them.
  - C. Faith that fails to work is not really faith. Gal. 5:6.
    - 1. The inefficiency of a faith that fails to work by love is that it is not real honest faith at all.
    - 2. Love's proper relationship to faith is that love grows out of faith.
- II. Genuine faith and an impure heart cannot dwell together.
  - A. A person who claims to have firm faith which he will never abandon, but still has an impure heart; this person must be told that he has no faith at all for his heart is unchanged.
  - B. One may regard all the doctrines that are preached in the Lutheran Church as true, but if his heart is still in its old condition and saturated with the love of sin, his whole faith is mere sham.
  - C. Those who seek honor from men have no faith either for true faith gives honor to God alone.
- III. Justifying or saving faith must not be construed as a work which man can produce in himself.
  - A. Faith, justifying faith, may not be represented as an inert mental act regarding certain matters as true which can co-exist with mortal sin: this is to treat faith as a work man can produce in himself.
  - B. True faith is a treasure which only the Holy Spirit can bestow.

- C. True faith and good conscience must be companions otherwise there is no true faith.
- IV. It is important to know precisely what is the saving or justifying elements in a person's faith.

#### Thesis XI

In the seventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when there is a disposition to offer the comfort of the Gospel only to those who have been made contrite by the Law, not from fear of the wrath and punishment of God, but from love of God.

- I. Since the Fall, the Law has but one single function and that is to lead men to the knowledge of their sins.
  - A. The Law has no power to renew man for this power is vested solely in the Gospel.
  - B. An unrenewed or unconverted person who claims that he loves God is stating an untruth: for a person cannot love God while he is without faith.
- II. To demand of a poor sinner that he must know from love of God, be alarmed on account of his sins and feel sorry for them, is an abominable perversion of Law and Gospel.
  - A. A sinner without faith cannot love God.
  - B. Under these circumstances, and until faith comes, the poor sinner will be able only to hate God.
  - C. This point of fear and frustration or feeling of a great need of refuge is the point where a genuine preacher of the Gospel steps in to show the sinner how easy salvation is.
  - D. The Law produces not love of God but the knowledge of sin.
    - 1. A person can possess the knowledge of sin without the love of God.
    - 2. When the Law is preached to a person with inward sin that individual rears up against the preaching and does not become better but worse.
    - 3. Therefore, the man who has been brought to desperation has taken a significant step forward on the way to his salvation.
  - E. The man who has been made desperate, smarting under the Law's judgment, will receive the Gospel with joy.

- III. When preaching to contrite sinners, do not be stingy with the Gospel.
- A. The consolation of the Gospel must be generously brought to even the greatest sinner.
  - B. No person can produce contrition in himself for godly sorrow is a sorrow that God alone can produce or work in man.
  - C. There is good news for the genuinely contrite persons: they are in fit condition to approach the throne of grace to receive their forgiveness.
  - D. Genuine contrition is solely from God toward God.

### Thesis XII

In the eighth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher represents contrition alongside of faith as a cause of the forgiveness of sins.

- I. Contrition has a proper and necessary place in God's redeeming plan.
  - A. Contrition is necessary if a person wishes to obtain forgiveness of his sins.
    - 1. When Jesus said: "Repent and believe the Gospel" he meant contrition must come.
    - 2. Whenever repentance is placed in opposition to faith, it signifies nothing else than contrition.
  - B. Contrition, however, is not a cause of the forgiveness of sins. That is, contrition is not necessary on account of the forgiveness of sin but on account of faith which alone apprehends the forgiveness of sin.
- II. When contrition is taught as a cause of the forgiveness of sins, there is a mingling of Law and Gospel.
  - A. Contrition is an effect solely of the Law.
    - 1. To regard contrition as a cause of the forgiveness of sins is equivalent to turning the Law into a message of grace and the Gospel into Law.
    - 2. This is a perversion which overthrows the entire Christian religion.
  - B. Contrition is not even a good work that is, an anguish which a person produces in himself.

1. Genuine repentance is produced in man by God only when the Law is preached in all its sternness and when man does not wilfully resist its influence.
  2. The purpose of contrition is only to the end that he may be roused from security and ask, What must I do to be saved?
- C. To Luther repentance was the very heart of the Gospel.
1. Repentance, to Luther meant simply that one be alarmed on account of his sins and desire the mercy of God.
  2. Therefore, he could go to him with the assurance that He would receive him as he was, with all his sins and anguish and misery.
- D. If a man has the desire to come to Jesus, he has true contrition even if he does not feel it.
- E. Should a pastor be too readily satisfied with a partial contrition he may inadvertantly treat contrition as a merit.
1. There is not a particular time measurement or specific act to define or qualify as contrition enough for acceptance.
  2. A person crushed and broken without any comfort anywhere and looking anxiously for consolation, such a person is truly contrite.
- III. A principal reason why many at this point mingle Law and Gospel is that they fail to distinguish the daily repentance of Christians from the repentance which precedes faith.
- A. Daily repentance is what David calls sacrifice.
1. This is not a repentance which precedes faith but one which follows it.
  2. The great majority of Christians who have the pure doctrine have a keener experience of repentance after faith than of repentance prior to faith.
- B. David had contrition together with faith and this is the sacrifice which pleases God: this contrition is at once an effect of the Law and an operation of the Gospel.

#### Thesis XIII

In the ninth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when one makes an appeal to believe in a manner as if a person could make himself or

at least help toward that end, instead of preaching faith into a person's heart by laying the Gospel promises before him.

- I. The demand of faith should not be confused with the demand of the Law.
  - A. The demand of the Law is an order: if this same order type demand of Law were applied to faith it would make faith a work.
  - B. The demand of faith is of an entirely different nature for the demand of faith is a blessed invitation: "Come for all is now ready."
- II. The error against which this thesis is directed is this, that man can produce faith in himself.
  - A. If a person were able to produce faith in himself, then faith would become a work.
    1. To assert that faith is required for salvation is not saying that man can produce faith in himself.
    2. The mere use of demands does not prove that man can comply with them.
    3. The opposite is true: by serving notice on me that I owe Him obedience to all His commandments He shows me that though I put forth my utmost endeavor I cannot meet my obligations.
    4. Having humbled me, He then approaches me with His Gospel.
  - B. An orthodox preacher must be able to preach a sermon on faith without ever using the term 'faith.'
    1. Instead of appealing to his hearers to believe, Luther preached concerning the work of Christ, salvation by grace, and the riches of God's mercy in Jesus Christ.
    2. Luther made his appeal in such a manner that the hearers got the impression that all they had to do was to take what was being offered them and find a resting-place in the lap of divine grace.
    3. He preached that any one who has come to understand that it is up to him to accept what is offered him and actually accepts it, has faith.
    4. To Luther, to be saved by faith means to acquiese in God's plan of salvation by simply accepting it.

Thesis XIV

In the tenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when faith is required as a condition of justification and salvation, as if a person were righteous in the sight of God and saved, not only by faith, but also on account of his faith, for the sake of his faith, and in view of his faith.

- I. Justification by faith is entirely God's work.
  - A. Man does not contribute to his own salvation.
    - 1. Belief in itself is not an act of man.
    - 2. Man is not saved by his own acts.
  - B. Man is saved solely by the doing and dying of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is Redeemer of the whole world.
- II. Modern theologians miss the thrust of this.
  - A. They assert that in salvation of man there are two kinds of activity.
    - 1. There is something that God must do: redeem man.
    - 2. There is something required that man must do: man must believe.
  - B. This teaching overthrows the Gospel completely.
    - 1. Rom. 3:24. ". . . being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. . ." teaches that we are justified gratuitously without anything, even the least thing being required us.
    - 2. If this were not true, our salvation could not be considered a gift.
  - C. We honor Jesus as our faithful Savior by making His Gospel our refuge.
- III. The command to believe is not a condition of man's justification and salvation but an invitation to accept a free gift from God.
  - A. God attaches no condition to His grace when He proffers it to a sinner and asks him to accept it.
  - B. Justification is a gift.
  - C. The preacher's urgent plea is simply an invitation to receive the Gospel or repent and be saved.

Thesis XV

In the eleventh place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance.

I. Both the terms Repentance and Gospel may be used in two senses.

A. The term Repentance has both a wide and a narrow sense.

1. In the wide sense, it signifies conversion viewed in its entirety, embracing knowledge of sin, contrition and faith. Acts 2:38.
  - a. Here 'Repent and be baptized' refers to conversion in its entirety, inclusive of faith.
  - b. What he means to say is this: If you acknowledge your sins and believe in the Gospel which I have just preached to you, then be baptised for the forgiveness of sins.
2. The term Repentance is used in a narrow sense to signify the knowledge of sin and heartfelt sorrow and contrition.
  - a. Repentance used in the narrow sense does not include faith: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." Acts 20:21.
  - b. When faith is named separately in [a] text the term repentance cannot embrace knowledge of sin, contrition and faith. Matt. 21:32.

B. The Gospel has both a wide and a narrow meaning.

1. Its wide meaning is used merely by way of synecdoche signifying anything that Jesus preached.
  - a. This would include Jesus' very poignant preaching of the Law.
  - b. A case in point being in His Sermon on the Mount where He reproved wicked men.
2. The narrow meaning of [the Gospel], is its proper sense.
  - a. The Gospel in its narrow sense [means] the exclusion of the Law.
  - b. Eph. 6:15 speaks of "the Gospel of Peace" since the Law does not bring peace, but only unrest, the apostle in the text is speaking of the Gospel in the narrow sense.



- C. It is extremely dangerous and also harmful to the souls of men for a minister to preach in such a manner as to lead men to believe that he regards the Gospel in its narrow and proper sense as a preaching of the Law and the anger of God against sinners, calling them to repentance.

II. This thesis has two additional objectives leveled at it.

A. Do not the Scriptures themselves call the Gospel a Law?

- 1. In Rom. 3:27 we simply have a play on words and a figure of speech.
- 2. Also in Rom. 10:16 (. . . obeyed the Gospel) here does not make the Gospel an improved Law but a willing obedient response to God both in Law and His gracious will.
- 3. When we accept what He gives, we are said to obey Him.

B. According to the Scripture which refers to the Gospel in the strict sense, there are a number of identifying marks.

- 1. Whenever the Gospel is contrasted with the Law, it is quite certain that the term Gospel does not refer to the Gospel in the wide, but the narrow sense.
- 2. Whenever the Gospel is presented as the peculiar teaching of Christ, or as the doctrine that proclaims Christ, it cannot refer to the Law at the same time.
- 3. Whenever poor sinners are named as the subject to whom the Gospel is addressed, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense. Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18.
- 4. Whenever forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation by grace are named as effects of the Gospel, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense. Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13.
- 5. When faith is named as the correlate of the Gospel, the reference is to the Gospel in the strict sense. Mark 1:15; Mark 16:15-16.

#### Thesis XVI

In the twelfth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices and engage in certain works of piety and virtuous practices.

- I. Conversion is not this that certain vices are discarded and replaced by certain works of piety but this: that a man is completely changed by becoming a new creature, or being born anew.

- A. Genuine conversion produces a living faith in a person.
  - B. What the Lord requires is a person completely changed, a new creature that has been born over with a new mind, who is quitting vice and doing good works.
  - C. The rationalist fails to understand what a good work is: only those works God has wrought are good. Matt. 15:13.
- II. Even believing pastors may, without being aware of it, slip into a horrible commingling of Law and Gospel, in their private ministrations and in exercise of church discipline.
- A. Pastors are often required to deal with church members who are not really Christian but worldlings who practice deception.
  - B. The deceiver must be made to see acts alone do not make a person a Christian.
  - C. These deceivers need to be preached to in such a manner as to rouse them out of their spiritual sleep and death to receive the new birth.
  - D. Luther insists that in a regenerated person everything that he does is God's work--alone--for from a pure foundation nothing but good sweet water can flow: in a regenerated person, everything he does is God's good work.
  - E. The gist of all this teaching is that Christ wants to make us godly from the root upward.

#### Thesis XVII

In the thirteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a description is given of faith, both as regards its strength and consciousness and productiveness of it, that does not fit all believers at all times.

- I. Young ministers at times imagine that in order to prevent hypocrites from regarding themselves as Christians, they cannot raise the demands which they make upon those who are Christians too high.
  - A. In their zeal such pastors must be careful not to go beyond the Word of God.
  - B. The ultimate aim of the pastor must be to lead his hearers to the assurance that they have forgiveness of sins with God.
- II. The apostle Paul in Romans 7:18 describes the Christian as a double being.

- A. The Christian always desires what is good even though frequently he does not accomplish the good he desires.
  - B. If a preacher describes a Christian in such a manner as if he does not really will what is good unless he accomplishes it, the description is unbiblical for to will what is good is the main trait of the Christian.
  - C. A minister has no right to denounce a person as an unChristian because he is not doing all he should as long as the individual maintains that he does not will his imperfections. Gal. 5:17; Heb. 12:1.
  - D. The minister, therefore, must furnish Christians the proper remedy when they sin, which is to rise promptly from their unintentional fall.
- III. The pastor must be able to deal with sin while identifying real Christianity.
- A. The real Christian learns by experience to sense the danger of sin in his life.
    - 1. When he has sinned he feels himself urged promptly to seek his Father in Heaven.
    - 2. He confesses his sin for Jesus' sake and asks to be forgiven and inwardly feels assured that he has been forgiven.
  - B. A preacher must not set up a unique example of a person under attack and point up his victorious attitude as the normative Christian attitude under these circumstances.
    - 1. The preacher must not falsely depict a Christian as a person who does not commit sin nor fear death and is constant in prayer.
    - 2. Christians are also tempted by money and riches at times.
- IV. It is of decisive importance that a pastor know whether the fallen sinner loves the Word of God and His Savior or whether he is a hardened sinner and leads a shameful life.
- A. These are areas of great importance for insincere unbelievers as well as Christians at times want to make a show of their sanctity, piety and exemplary Christianity.
  - B. We must read the Gospels and note how the disciples conducted themselves.
  - C. The pastor may refer to actions of strong or exceptionally faithful Christians: This could serve as an incentive in his member's individual Christianity.

- D. When receiving new members into the congregation do not misjudge their conversation for some may cling to the Savior but not know how to express their faith verbally.

### Thesis XVIII

In fourteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely.

- I. No pastor who is conversant with pure doctrine will make the claim that the universal corruption of mankind that includes embracing dominant and willful sins on the part of the believers is a part of the believer's makeup.
  - A. No one who is conversant with the pure doctrine will make the unqualified assertion that a Christian can be a fornicator and adulterer.
  - B. When speaking of men sinning, the qualifying statement may be 'as we by nature' or 'as long as a person is still in the state of natural depravity and is unregenerate.'
  - C. Mankind is divided into two great classes: believers and unbelievers.
    - 1. Your hearers must learn that they are either spiritually dead or spiritually alive: converted or unconverted: under God's wrath or in a state of grace.
    - 2. To confound these two classes of men (that are concerned in these two ways) is an abominable mingling of Law and Gospel.
- II. Sin will not be able to dominate Christians.
  - A. It is absolutely impossible that a person who is in a state of grace should be ruled by sin. I Cor. 6:7-11.
  - B. Repentance is essential and it consists in this: that he desires to commit these sins no more.
  - C. Whoever voluntarily and intentionally commits these sins, has by that token a proof that he is not a Christian but a reprobate who is moved, not by the Spirit of God, but by the hellish spirit. 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

Thesis XIX

In the fifteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher speaks of certain sins as if they are not of a damnable, but a venial nature.

- I. A distinction must be made between a mortal sin and a venial sin.
  - A. A person failing to make this distinction between a mortal and a venial sin does not rightly divide Law and Gospel.
    1. Certain sins called 'mortal sins' that expel the Holy Ghost from the believer and bring on spiritual death.
    2. When the Holy Ghost is driven out, faith also is ejected; for no one can come to faith nor retain faith without the Holy Ghost.
  - B. Sins of weakness or rashness which a Christian commits without forfeiting the indwelling of the Holy Ghost are 'venial sins.'
- II. We must not think of any sin so trifling as to be automatically remitted by God because God does not regard them as great evil.
  - A. The practitioner of venial sin must not be allowed to feel undisturbed by his sin nor regard it as unimportant before his Holy and Righteous God.
  - B. To any person who rises up against God He is a terrible fire.
  - C. There is no sin venial in itself; but there are such sins as will not hinder a person from still believing in Jesus Christ with all his heart.
  - D. The believer, the very person who regards sin as a very serious matter, receives the word of comfort "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" Rom. 8:1.
- III. Evangelical preaching means that sin must be magnified.
  - A. The minister must proclaim the judgment of God.
  - B. The believer must be taught that he sins so much each day that except for Christ, God would have to cast him into hell.
  - C. Christian experience itself proves that in its nature, no sin is venial.

Thesis XX

In the sixteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a person's salvation is made to depend on his association with the visible orthodox church and when salvation is denied to every person who errs in any article of faith.

- I. The doctrine that says the visible Lutheran Church is the church outside of which there is no salvation is in error.
  - A. The mother of this awful error is the doctrine that the Church is a visible institute which Christ has established on earth, differing in no way from a religious state.
    1. This view is erroneous for the Word of God says clearly: ". . . upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18.
    2. This rock is Christ and no one is a member of the Church except he who is built upon Christ, which is not a mechanical connecting with the church but rather the placing of one's confidence in Jesus Christ.
  - B. No one is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets who does not believingly cling to their word. Eph. 2:19-22.
    1. No one is a member of the Church without a living faith.
    2. Only he is a member of the Church who experiences the constant outflowing of the energy from Christ the Head of the Church.
  - C. In His parables Christ does not mean to describe the essences of the Church, but the outward form in which it appears in the world.
    1. The church is composed of only regenerate persons yet it never presents itself in the form of a congregation that is made up of none but true Christians.
    2. Not until its consummation in the life eternal will the Church appear without its spots and blemishes, entirely purified separating the insincere and unregenerate.
    3. Only God knows whether an individual is a true member of the church.
    4. To the eyes of God alone the church is visible, to the eyes of man the church is invisible.
- II. This error of the Lutheran Church being the visible church outside of which there is no salvation is the primary falsehood of our time.

- A. Those who teach this error have only exchanged weapons with the papist.
- B. The worst feature of this false teaching is this: it makes a person's salvation depend on his membership in, and communion with, the visible orthodox church which overthrows the doctrine of justification by faith.
- C. In reality, the true Church is not limited to an external organization but rather extends throughout the world.

### III. The church is gathered to the Lord through the power of His Word.

- A. Whenever the Word of God is proclaimed and confessed or even recited during the service, the Lord is gathering a people for Himself for it is always bearing fruit or souls to God.
- B. The false doctrine that the Lutheran Church is the only true church involves a fatal confounding of the Law and the Gospel for the setting up of a demand of some kind as necessary to salvation in addition to faith means commingling Law and Gospel.
- C. In the sense that Lutheran Church has the pure unadulterated Word, it is the true visible church: but this is only in that one sense.

### Thesis XXI

In the seventeenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when men are taught that the Sacraments produce salutary effects ex opere operato, that is by the mere outward performance of a sacramental act.

#### I. No sacrament is of any benefit to one who receives it in unbelief.

- A. Such a teaching that despite unbelief, and providing a person is not living in any mortal sin, he will derive some benefit by merely submitting to a sacramental act, contradicts the Word of God and is a false doctrine.
- B. When partaken in unbelief, Baptism and Holy Communion place any person under condemnation for not approaching with faith in their hearts.
- C. It is of paramount importance that I believe, that I regard, not the water in Baptism, but the promise which Christ has attached to the water: the same applies to the Holy Supper.
- D. The Word of God does not benefit a person who does not believe.

#### II. The Lutheran Church maintains that Baptism is the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit.

- A. The Lutheran Church holds to the Lord's Word on the Sacrament of Baptism: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved."
- B. The Lutherans maintain the truth of the Lord's Words which say, "This is my body, which is given for you" and "This is My blood, which is shed for you."
- C. That which urges a Lutheran to receive the sacraments is the promise of grace attached to these outward or visible signs.
- D. The Scriptures do not teach that mere outward acts save anyone.
- E. The sacraments do, however, produce effects in the believer's heart; this effect is the same effect that the spoken Word produces for the symbols simply indicate visually what the Word proclaims.

#### Thesis XXII

In the eighteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted; moreover, when a person's inability to believe is mistaken for his not being permitted to believe.

- I. The Pietists were guilty of confusing Law and the Gospel by advocating the error that all men divided into three classes: the unconverted, those awakened but not converted, and those truly converted.
  - A. According to the Scriptures there are only two classes of people: those who are converted and those who are not.
  - B. The pietists assert that a contrition like unto David's is a normative Christian experience without which there is no true conversion nor salvation.
  - C. This is an erroneous assumption: Peter on Pentecost never urged this on his penitent believers, but instead urged only "Turn to your Lord Jesus, believe in Him, and as a seal of your faith, receive Baptism, and everything will be all right."
- II. According to the Scripture it is not difficult to be converted, but to remain in a converted state is difficult.
  - A. Repentance is not a work of man but an estate that God produces in a person.
  - B. The accepting of the Gospel immediately brings an inward conflict: the conflict always comes after receiving or being converted.



- C. The conflict is a believer's conflict which results from the cross or the narrow way.
- III. The Pietists mistook the inability to believe for not being permitted to believe.
- A. A person may be in such a state of sin that he cannot believe.
  - B. It must be remembered, however, that any person may believe at any time.
  - C. Whoever tells a person that he may not believe is either wicked or in this respect still blind for by Christ's sacrifice the entire world has been reconciled to God and His wrath has been removed.
  - D. Now that the entire world has been redeemed and reconciled to God, it is a horrible teaching to tell any person that he may not believe that he has been reconciled and redeemed of sins.
  - E. This teaching is contrary to the doctrine of absolution for Jesus redeemed the entire world and then gave to His followers power to forgive sins.
  - F. Absolution like Holy Communion is appropriated by faith.

#### Thesis XXIII

In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when an attempt is made, by means of the demands or the threats or the promises of the Law, to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly; on the other hand, when an endeavor is made, by means of the commands of the Law rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.

- I. When any attempt is made by means of the Law to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly, the Word of God is not rightly divided.
  - A. The attempt is often made by three means or inducements: demands, threats or promises of the Law.
  - B. After the fall it was never the purpose of the Law to make men godly.
  - C. The Law has only one real purpose and that is to reveal men's sins.
- II. The confounding of the Law and the Gospel often occurs when ministers become aware that all their Gospel-preaching is useless because gross sins of the flesh still occur among their hearers.

- A. A preacher may come to the conclusion that he has preached too much Gospel to his people and for a while he will preach only the Law.
  - 1. The Law may temporarily alter behavior but it cannot change their hearts, but by it they can know what is pleasing to God.
  - 2. The Law cannot change men's hearts: only the Gospel can change a person's heart.
    - a. Even the most corrupt congregation can be changed by preaching of the Gospel in all of its sweetness.
    - b. The reasons why congregations are corrupt is invariably this, that its pastors have not sufficiently preached the Gospel to their people.
- B. The pastor must not see himself as the policeman of the flock, but the preacher of the Gospel which changes the hearts of men.
- C. Only the Gospel can change men's hearts.

#### Thesis XXIV

In the twentieth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost is described in a manner as if it could not be forgiven because of its magnitude.

- I. The blasphemy to which our text refers is directed against the office, of operation, of the Holy Spirit.
  - A. The Holy Spirit is not a more glorious and exalted person than the Father, and the Son, but He is co-equal with them.
  - B. The office of the Holy Spirit is to call men to Christ and to keep them with Him.
    - 1. Whoever spurns the office of the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven of his sins for in this act he speaks against the office of the Holy Spirit whose very function is to call men to Christ.
    - 2. This blasphemy is not a secret sin of the heart but a sin that must be uttered against the Holy Spirit with the mouth.
  - C. To declare a work of the Holy Ghost, a work of the devil when one is convinced that it is a work of the Holy Ghost, is that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

D. The Holy Spirit brings faith to man from God and unless we receive from Him we shall never have it.

1. Whoever rejects the Holy Spirit is beyond help.

2. This includes God's help.

II. It is characteristic of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that the person who has committed it cannot be restored to repentance.

A. The sinner himself projects himself to this situation of irretrievable impenitence.

1. When this condition reaches a certain point, God ceases to operate on this individual.

2. The impossibility for salvation resides here: the sinner cannot be induced to repent.

3. Man can say of no person before his death that he is guilty of this sin against the Holy Spirit for he may be penitent in his heart and lay hold of the promise of God.

B. In general, when preaching on the subject, the minister must aim at convincing his hearers that they have not committed this sin rather than warn them not to commit it.

1. This is proper for to a person who has committed this sin preaching is of no benefit.

2. Hence only a fit subject for this Word would be listening anyway.

C. The sin is not unpardonable because of its magnitude but because the sinner rejects the remedy for his predicament.

D. If a person has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, he would feel no remorse or distress.

1. Instead they would constantly delight in continuing to blaspheme the Gospel.

2. Christians in distress still have faith and the Spirit of God is working in them.

3. If the Spirit of God continues to work in them, they have not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

E. The individual who is guilty of this sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is condemned primarily because of his unbelief.

Thesis XXV

In the twenty-first place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching.

- I. To be rightly divided the Word of God must be preached with a predominance in teaching and preaching placed on the Gospel rather than the Law.
  - A. The Law must be preached as a preparation for the Gospel: this is a true preacher's aim.
  - B. The Gospel must be preached "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:15-16.
    1. The thrust of the message while bringing joy is that he who does not believe will be condemned.
    2. This is especially sweet for it discloses 'unbelief' as the only reason for damnation.
    3. When a person refuses to believe the words of Jesus his unbelief sends him to perdition.
  - C. The preaching of the Gospel must predominate the preaching of the Law.
    1. When this happens the pastor's messages are filled with joy and the congregation comes joyfully alive.
    2. If the people are not joyful but sleepy the Law and the Gospel have been mingled.
- II. The finest form of confounding Law and Gospel occurs when the Gospel is preached along with the Law, but is not the predominating element in the sermon.
  - A. Proclaiming Christ includes telling men how to attain saving faith.
  - B. If a preacher does not preach faith and tell them how to attain faith, his people will be spiritually starved to death.
  - C. The Gospel must be allowed to predominate preaching for your congregation must be fed the bread of life.
  - D. The Law has its proper function: to prepare men for the sweet comfort of the Gospel, but it must never be confounded with the Gospel.
    1. The Law has no nourishment to feed people, only the Gospel is the Bread of Life.

2. The Law crushes or kills; the Gospel gives life.
  - a. When the Law has made the iron to glow.
  - b. Apply the Gospel immediately to shape it into its proper form.
  - c. If the iron is allowed to cool, nothing can be done with it.

## APPENDIX II

### A HELPFUL DIGEST

#### Excerpts From E. Eckhardt's Apparatus

The doctrinal content of the entire Holy Scripture, both of the Old and the New Testament, is made up of two doctrines differing fundamentally from each other: namely, the Law and the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

"The Law tells me what I am to do . . . [The Law] is spiritual [and it] must be preached in its full sternness."<sup>2</sup>

The Law has certain specific functions. "It produces the knowledge of sin . . . [It also] reveals men's sins . . . [and] terrifies men. . . ."<sup>3</sup> The Law kills and condemns. The Law is full of threats, for all threats belong to the Law.<sup>4</sup>

The Law has certain limitations. The Law cannot make a person righteous.<sup>5</sup> "Foolish [is] that preacher who thinks that conditions in the congregation will improve if he preaches the Law . . . [for the Law] does not serve the purpose of making men godly."<sup>6</sup> [However,] "what the Law could not effect is accomplished by the Gospel."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 6. The author of this dissertation is in debt to E. Eckhardt's apparatus in the appendices, pp. 415-419 in the following ten pages.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

The Law has certain peculiarities. The Law is written in man's heart . . . and tells us what we are to do [and not to do]."<sup>8</sup> The Law only makes demands and its promises are made only on certain conditions.<sup>9</sup>

The Law produces certain effects. "The Law uncovers sin [and] increases the lust for sinning. [The Law] revives sin, [and] hurls man into despair," The Law produces contrition, but the Law offers no comfort whatever."<sup>10</sup> In short, "The Law produces a thirst" it cannot quench.<sup>11</sup>

The Law has a proper subject; that is, the Law is to be preached to secure sinners.<sup>12</sup> When the Law is preached to its proper subject, it must be preached in its full sternness. "Woe unto the pastor who knows that his congregation needs an application of the Law, but keeps silent."<sup>13</sup> Some may object to the preaching of the Law and say "That is not the way for an evangelical minister to preach. . . . [Walther retorts] - but it most certainly is."<sup>14</sup>

"The Gospel is a message of joy . . . Christ shows us what His Gospel is [He says,] 'I have been godly in your place'. "<sup>15</sup> "The Gospel is joy and glad tidings."<sup>16</sup> "The Gospel does not require our works for making us godly . . . [The Gospel requires] nothing but faith."<sup>17</sup>

The Gospel is in both the Old and New Testaments. The Gospel must predominate in our preaching.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 417.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 415.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 419.

The Gospel does not require of us to earn salvation. It does not require our works for making us godly for the Gospel does not teach us how we may make ourselves worthy in the sight of God.<sup>19</sup>

The term Gospel is used in two senses: in a wide and in a narrow sense. It is taken in a narrow sense when contrasted with the Law . . . [or] when presented as the peculiar teaching of Christ.<sup>20</sup> It is . . . [also used] in a narrow sense when contrasted with the Law,<sup>21</sup> [when] poor sinners are named as the subjects to whom the Gospel is addressed . . . when forgiveness of sins is named as effect of the Gospel . . . [or] when faith is named as a correlate of the Gospel. . . .<sup>22</sup> [In short,] "The Gospel in its narrow sense is not a preaching of the Law; calling sinners to repentance . . . [for the] term Gospel is never used in place of the Law."<sup>23</sup>

There are a number of contrasting differences between the Law and the Gospel. The difference is not to be found in the following three ways. [The difference is not] "that the Gospel is divine, [and] the Law [a] human doctrine [for] (both doctrines are contained in the Scripture)."<sup>24</sup> [Also, let it not be thought] "That only the Gospel is necessary, [and] not the Law [for] (both are necessary)."<sup>25</sup> [Let it not be held] "That the Law is the teaching of the Old, the Gospel, the teaching of the New Testament, [for] (both are contained in the Old and both in the New Testaments)."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 415.



There are five distinct differences between the Law and the Gospel. They are different in their manner of being revealed to men. The Law is written in man's heart while the Gospel becomes known only through an act of the Holy Spirit. This act of the Holy Spirit is a work of revelation.<sup>27</sup>

The Law and the Gospel differ in their content. "The Law tells us what to do . . . [while] the Gospel [tells us] what God is doing . . . "28 "The Law only demands, the Gospel only gives. . . ."29 (Some register an objection here as though the Gospel demands faith but rather it simply offers a blessed invitation not a demand.<sup>30</sup>

The Law and the Gospel differ in regard to their promises. "The Law's promises are made on certain conditions, those of the Gospel without [any] conditions [at all]."<sup>31</sup>

The Law and the Gospel differ in regard to their threats. Threat belongs only to the Law for the Gospel contains no threats whatever.

They differ in regard to their effect. "The Law uncovers sin, increases the lust for sinning, revives sin, hurls man into despair, produces contrition, but offers no comfort . . . "32 "The Gospel offers and gives us faith, fills us with peace and joy, and makes us capable of all good works. . . ."<sup>33</sup> The Law produces [a] thirst [it cannot quench, but] the Gospel [only] refreshes.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

The Law and the Gospel each has a specific subject to whom each is appropriately applied. "[The] Law [is to be applied] to secure sinners, the Gospel [is to be] applied to alarmed sinners."<sup>35</sup>

It is vital to maintain the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel. "Every passage of Scripture can be classified as belonging either to the Law or the Gospel. . . ."<sup>36</sup> "Both must be preached . . . [and both must be preached] at the same time."<sup>37</sup> That is, every sermon must contain both the doctrine of the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel. Both the Law and the doctrine of the Gospel may be contained in one sentence.<sup>38</sup>

The final test of a sermon is that the Law and the Gospel be rightly distinguished in it. The Law and the Gospel must not only be in the speech, but also in the heart and essence of the preacher. No Law elements are to be mingled into your statement regarding the Gospel. "The distinction must be maintained at every point."<sup>39</sup>

The proper distinction between Law and Gospel must above all be maintained in the article of justification.<sup>40</sup>

"This is equally true in using the office of the keys of the church. The pastor must give to each individual his due portion . . ."<sup>41</sup> "Woe upon that pastor who knows that his congregation needs an application of the Law, but keeps silent."<sup>42</sup> The importance of this distinction can further be seen for the following reasons. "Corruption entered the church when Law and Gospel began to be confounded . . ."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

Luther's own eyes were opened the moment he discovered this distinction and he ceased his agonies and rejoiced.<sup>44</sup> This distinction is the principal matter in regard to the doctrine of justification and without this distinction it is impossible to keep Christian doctrine unadulterated.<sup>45</sup> He who is ignorant of this distinction is impressed that there are a great many contradictions in the Bible but the knowledge of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel solves all the apparent contradictions.<sup>46</sup> It is a matter of paramount importance that the pastor experience this distinction for himself. This knowledge brings genuine peace to the pastors and makes pastors capable of discharging the office that is to save the world.<sup>47</sup>

Dividing the Law and the Gospel properly is a very difficult task. It is taught by the Holy Spirit and it is taught only in the school of the Holy Spirit.<sup>48</sup> It often happens, however, that a simpler person such as Cordatus may make the distinction better than a scholar like Chrysostom or Andrew Osiander.<sup>49</sup> It was here in the area of failing to properly distinguish between the Law and the Gospel that most of the reformers of the church before the Reformation were at fault.<sup>50</sup> "He however, who is well-versed in the art of dividing the Law from the Gospel may be called a Doctor of Holy Writ... . The doctrine itself is easy; every child can comprehend the Law and the Gospel; but the practical application and the use of this doctrine presents difficulties.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

The difficulties of mastering this art confront the minister in several areas. The first area of difficulty manifests itself in his personal or private Christian life. There he is confronted in the area where he is a minister and again as a theologian. Difficulties face him in private ministration to individuals.<sup>52</sup> A minister must be able to distinguish whether a person he is facing in a hypocrite or a true Christian.<sup>53</sup> Finally, "a minister must deal with Christians according to their particular spiritual condition."<sup>54</sup>

There are certain sentences that should be avoided such as the following:

1. If a person fears death, he is not a child of God.
2. Worldly people are without joys and peace.
3. Christians are happy people without worry or trouble.
4. Anyone purposely sinning falls from grace.
5. Good works are not necessary.
6. Sin does not harm a Christian.
7. The Law has been abolished.<sup>55</sup>

Both the Law and the Gospel must be preached, but without them being mingled with each other. When the Law and the Gospel are commingled both lose their virtue.<sup>56</sup> Also when the Law and the Gospel are commingled, a third substance which is entirely foreign to the first two substances is created. Yellow and blue combined is neither yellow nor blue but green.<sup>57</sup> Even so the Law and the Gospel cannot be commingled without the falsification of doctrine.<sup>58</sup> The end result of this falsification is this: the article of justification is sacrificed. The pure teaching of the article of justification cannot then be preserved.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

In such case, the merit of Christ is obscured.<sup>60</sup> By confounding Law and Gospel, the pastor renders his preaching utterly futile.<sup>61</sup> Without the Law the Gospel is not understood and without the Gospel, the Law is of no benefit. Hearers become confused in science for lack of true, reliable and abiding comfort.<sup>62</sup>

The Law and the Gospel can be confounded in the following ways.

1. "When Christ is made a new Lawgiver." Thesis V.
2. "When Gospel elements are mingled with the Law, and vice versa." Thesis VI.
3. "When the Gospel is preached first and then the Law." Thesis VII.
4. "When the Law is preached to those who are already in terror on account of their sins." Thesis VIII.
5. "When the Gospel is preached to such as live securely in their sins." Thesis VIII.
6. "When sinners who have been terrified by the Law are directed, not to the Word and Sacraments, but to their own prayer and wrestling with God." Thesis IX.
7. "When sinners terrified by the Law are told to keep on praying and struggling until they feel that God has received them into grace." Thesis IX.
8. "When the preacher describes faith in a manner as if the mere inert acceptance of truths, even while a person is living in mortal sins, renders that person righteous." Thesis X
9. "When faith is described in a manner as though it makes a person righteous for the reason that it produces in him love and a reformation of his mode of living." Thesis X.
10. "When the comfort of the Gospel is offered only to those who have been made contrite by the Law, not from fear of punishment, but from love of God." Thesis XI.
11. "When the preacher represents contrition alongside of faith as a cause of the forgiveness of sins." Thesis XII.

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

12. "When one makes an appeal to believe in a manner as if a person could make himself believe or at least help toward that end." Thesis XIII.
13. "When faith is required as a condition of justification and salvation." Thesis XIV.
14. "When the Gospel is turned into a preaching of repentance." Thesis XV.
15. "When the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices." Thesis XVI.
16. "When a description is given of faith that does not fit all believers at all times." Thesis XVII.
17. "When the universal corruption of mankind is described in such a manner as to create the impression that even true believers are still under the spell of ruling sins and are sinning purposely." Thesis XVIII.
18. "When the preacher speaks of certain sins as if they were not of a damnable, but of a venial nature." Thesis XIX.
19. "When a person's salvation is made to depend on his association with the visible orthodox church." Thesis XX.
20. "When men are taught that the Sacraments produce salutary effects ex opere operato." Thesis XXI.
21. "When a false distinction is made between a person's being awakened and his being converted." Thesis XXII.
22. "When a person's inability to believe is mistaken for his not being permitted to believe." Thesis XXIII.
23. "When an attempt is made to make men godly by means of the Law." Thesis XXIV.
24. "When the unforgiveable sin against the Holy Ghost is described in a manner as if it could not be forgiven because of its magnitude." Thesis XXV.
25. "When the person teaching does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching." Thesis XXVI.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 416, 419.

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